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UNITED FACE SAVING

On the face of it, all faces have been saved in Persia and Uno. The Security Council put its foot down softly on Mr. Gromyko's empty hair and kept it down unanimously to the end; Persia will be free of Russian troops in six weeks' ime; the U.S.S.R. gets its oil and can broadcast o the world that the discussion of the Soviet-Persian question by the Security Council has been "superfluous." In international affairs at the moment there is perhaps some satisfaction to be derived even from face saving. The Soviet-Persian crisis was itself superfluous; it never ought to have arisen and there was no question nherent in it which should have produced the ension of the last few weeks. That it arose nd became dangerously acute proves merely he depth of disunity among the three Great Powers. There is a little consolation to be derived from the fact that it has been settled nd that the Security Council did something o ensure that it was settled with some respect or international decency and for the face, if ot the rights, of small nations.

These are the crumbs of consolation, and they re few and small. Already in the U.S.A. the irst reaction to the news of the settlement, a eeling that Uno had "triumphed," has given ay to less optimistic interpretations. It is bvious that Uno has not triumphed and that he course of events in this international crisis ffords no hope at all that Uno will work as an nstrument of international co-operation and peace. On the contrary, the lesson of the crisis is that n the present relations of the U.S.S.R., the .S.A., and Britain there is no foundation or co-operation and peace, and therefore for Uno. That is the lamentable fact which we ave to face. The future of Uno and the prospect f peace are intimately connected. Uno is the nly instrument which the Great Powers of he world possess for painfully rebuilding a eaceful and prosperous international society. ut to imagine that they can do that and "make Uno work" without the will to co-operate, ithout decency and friendliness, in an atmophere of perpetual acrimonious accusation and ecrimination, is fantastic.

It is difficult to see what the Soviet Government got, or hoped to get, out of forcing a crisis upon Uno and the world. Oil? They could have obtained that and all their other "claims," except the maintenance of the Red Army in Persia, without challenging and flouting the U.S.A., Britain, and Uno, and making Marx and Lenin turn uncomfortably in their graves. Their tactics and strategy in negotiations were bad—diplomatic rudeness and violence are not symptoms of sense or strength—and their prestige, which they seem to set some store by, was damaged in the eyes of nearly everyone, and not least among their real friends. Some allowance must, no doubt, be made for the fact that dictators are bad diplomatists. A Government which in internal affairs does not allow opposition is in an awkward position in an international conference where it can no longer settle differences by saying: "Off with his head outside." It was, therefore, perhaps inevitable that both Mr. Molotov and Mr. Gromyko, who do not understand the art of negotiation between equals, made a bad case worse.

But behind these bad international tactics and manners is something much more serious. It is clear that the Russians do not wish for co-operation and friendly relations between the three Allied Powers. It is essential now to state and face this fact frankly. We do not think that Stalin wants active hostility, far less war, between the U.S.S.R and ourselves or the U.S.A. But he sees his own and Russia's security only in complete intellectual and physical isolation from the West, behind a screen of minor states and "friendly governments" whose ideological colour will range from pale pink to deep red. This policy makes nonsense of Uno; for, if Uno is to succeed, it requires active trust and friendly co-operation between the Great Powers. It is just possible that the U.S.S.R. might pursue its policy of isolation without creating a hostile bloc against itself, if the policy was carried out with skilful moderation and behind a façade of friendliness and compromise. On the contrary, in acts and on the wireless, the Soviet Government seems to go out of its way to show its hostility and contempt for the West. The imminent danger is that, if Stalin continues these tactics, he will inevitably himself build up against himself that hostile bloc of capitalist Powers which has been the nightmare of Communism ever since 1919. In that case, Uno will become, not an instrument of international peace, but the instrument of the Western Bloc. Mr. Churchill's Fulton speech and President Truman's speech last Saturday at Chicago show that an icy little wind has already begun to blow in that direction.

In these depressing circumstances the direction of British policy requires drastic reconsideration. It is possible that Stalin may be induced by the results of his tactics during the last month to modify them; the way might then be open to real co-operation. The British Government should do everything to smooth the way for such a change. But there is small hope of it. If there is no change, it is doubtful whether, so far as Britain is concerned, the continuance of Uno is desirable. Its transformation into a bloc to which the U.S.S.R. is hostile and which is hostile to the U.S.S.R. would be inevitable. In the atomic age this country cannot afford to join any hostile bloc, for we cannot afford to take part in another war.

The Uncompleted Peace

It has been obvious for some time that the Peace Conference scheduled to meet in Paris on May 1 would have to be postponed. The Foreign Ministers' deputies, entrusted with the task of preparing draft treaties with Italy and the ex-enemy states of Eastern Europe, have made little or no progress. In the case of Italy there appears to be deep and unresolved disagreement both over reparations in kind and over the disposal of the former Italian overseas Empire—to say nothing of the frontier problems affecting Trieste and Venezia Giulia. Similarly, there is understood to be a wide difference of view between the U.S.S.R. and the Western Democracies over the conditions of peace applicable to Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In these circumstances, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Big Four, which is to be held in Paris on April 25th, seems an obviously sensible step. It is equally obvious that, if any progress is to be made in the settlement of Europe, their agenda will have to be enlarged to include a consideration of the future of Western Germany. This forms the main theme of a NEW STATESMAN AND NATION pamphlet (price 6d.), by Professor G. D. H. Cole, published this week. Unless and until an agreed policy for the treatment of Western Germany can be found—and this involves bridging a large gulf between the Russian and British points of view—it is difficult to see how the rest of the European post-war jig-saw puzzle can be fitted into place. One factor in this situation has now been clarified. In a speech delivered at Lille last Sunday M. Bidault made it clear that M. Gouin, the French Socialist Premier, has not carried his Cabinet with him in his suggestion that, provided there were international control, the Ruhr might be left politically as an integral part of the Reich. The French Foreign Minister emphasised that French policy was unchanged: the Ruhr must be treated as a "political entity independent of Germany." He also insisted that the Saar must be included in the economic and currency system of France. The sooner this French thesis forms the subject of a round-table discussion with the other three Occupation Powers, the better.

Social-Democrats in Germany

In the British, French and American sectors of Berlin a meeting of Social-Democrats opposed to fusion with the Communist Party has decided to elect an "independent" Berlin committee in opposition to the S.D.P.'s "fusionist" Central Committee. The new committee will presumably have the backing (and is, indeed, probably the creature) of the British and American Occupation authorities, who have made it clear that they reserve the right to refuse recognition to the proposed United Socialist Party. The Russians, in turn, will doubtless refuse to recognise the legality, in the sector of Berlin which they control, of the "independent" Social-Democrats, who will be labelled throughout the Reich by the Communists as the "stooges" of the Anglo-American capitalist democracies. In this battle of "stooges," if the British Government hopes to build up the S.D.P. as the mainstay of a reformed and liberal-minded Germany, then the Party must be given something more than merely negative support. It is not enough for the Occupation authorities to frown on Communism and to oppose the fusion of the Left in an *Einheitspartei.* The Social-Democrats must be given a chance to answer effectively the claim from the East that only in the Russian Zone have industry and agriculture been reorganised on Socialist lines, and workers' solidarity against reaction achieved.

Greek King and Cabinet

Within a week of its formation, the new Greek Government ran into a crisis on the constitutional question. Although King George accepted the resignation of the Regent in principle, he referred the matter back to the Cabinet for decision. Faced with an attempt by the Populist leaders to change the Regent—or to abolish the office—the three Right-wing Republicans, Papandreou, Venizelos, and Kanellopoulos, who were included in the Cabinet after British pressure, threatened to resign. By this threat, they hoped to secure the temporary retention of Archbishop Damaskinos; but the Regent is now insisting that his resignation be accepted. The Populists, who desire to hold a plebiscite on the monarchy as soon as possible, will try to get the British endorsement which has previously been denied. The King himself, in an effort to appear moderate, has expressed in an interview with the *Manchester Guardian* his hope that his supporters will refrain from "any rash act" and that the whole country will forget the past and turn enthusiastically to the task of reconstruction. But the statement assumes the King's return to Greece, and when he speaks of the present situation in Greece as "a happy achievement of a smooth return to Parliamentary life" it is difficult not to feel he is a little too disingenuous. The basic fact about King George is that his record prevents him from posing as a constitutional monarch: he is much more like the leader of the Populist Party. The new Cabinet includes some men who are seriously compromised by their occupation records and, apart from any trouble it may provoke on the question of the monarchy, is unlikely to produce any real solution for the increasing economic difficulties in Greece.

Food and the Nation

If the deficit countries carry out the recommendations of the European Emergency Cereals Conference and secure not merely economical use of bread grains but fair distribution as between town and country, a good harvest this year may save Europe from mass starvation, at the cost of heavy drafts on the grain exporting countries' accumulated stocks. And if the Food and Agricultural Organisation, when it meets next month, succeeds in promoting international agreement for a planned long-term increase in the world's food output, the present conditions of extreme shortage may give place to reasonable plenty within the next three or four years. All these, however, are large assumptions; and though in the successive Parliamentary debates on food and agricultural policy the Government had little difficulty in rebutting the Opposition's somewhat disingenuous charge that it had been guilty of miscalculations or inertia in the present crisis, doubts may still be felt whether this country is yet measuring up to its responsibilities both internationally and nationally. On the international plane it is easy to argue that such further economies in food consumption as we could reasonably be expected to make would represent a very small contribution to world supplies and that, so far as bread grains are concerned, the great "leak" is the increase of 6 million tons, as compared with 1938, in the amount of wheat used for animal feed in the four main exporting countries. It is pertinent, however, to recall that this diversion of wheat from human consumption is occasioned in part by our call on meat, bacon and dairy produce from North America. We should be in a stronger position to plead for greater austerity in the food surplus countries, if we instituted bread rationing without making it conditional on its (highly unlikely) imposition in the U.S.A. As for our own agricultural production, Mr. Tom Williams endeavoured on Monday to reassure the House that the labour force for this year's harvest would be adequate, and that the Government would press forward with the programme for the improvement of rural housing and distribution of electricity. But, apart from the fact that we shall be relying this year on the aid of about 200,000 prisoners-of-war, the improvement of rural housing and amenities will take time. There are no signs that a sufficient number of demobilised Service men are returning to the land, and there is little hope of their doing so, unless the level of agricultural wages, in which the Government has once again declined to interfere, is raised.

Peron's Majority

Juan Domingo Peron is now President-elect of Argentina, having secured 304 votes in the electoral college against the 72 pledged to his opponent, Dr. Tamborini. These figures, however, do not accurately reflect the polling, for a candidate has only to secure a bare majority in a province to win its entire electoral roll. The totals of the popular vote give Peron, with 1,479,517 votes, a lead of only two hundred and fifty thousand over his opponent. The most distressing results are those for Congress. Thanks to the division of the democratic poll by rival parties, Peron's Labour Party and the Radical splinter group supporting him have obtained more than twice as many seats as the Radicals, the only Opposition party with any real representation. The Conservatives won two seats, and the Socialists, previously seventeen strong, have been eliminated, whilst the Communists and Progressive Democrats, who alone formed an electoral list, also failed to win a single contest. Argentina will certainly now make every effort to consolidate relations with her neighbours, both economically and politically. Some Latin-American States have already informed Washington that the *Blue Book* exposing Peron and other Argentine leaders is "interesting, but unimportant," and clearly intend to do business with Peron, whose position has been greatly strengthened by his legal election. The United States so far has refused to sign a military treaty with Argentina: whether Mr. Braden will be able to maintain this critical line at the forthcoming Pan-American Conference is another matter. The war over, Latin-America may be less willing to follow Washington's lead.

What is Needed in Burma

Failure to recognise the political awakening which developed under Japanese occupation of Burma, as elsewhere in Asia, entails the disastrous consequence of popular hostility towards the West. Speaking in the House last week, Mr. Henderson supported retention of Section 139 of the Government of Burma Act. He overlooked these changes, and seemed to believe that an interest-free loan of £80 millions, with no fixed date of repayment, together with a qualified promise of elections before June, 1947, would meet the needs of the Burmans. Mr. Driberg and others asked for the speeding up of the electoral plans and the recognition of Burmese demands for independence. Otherwise, they rightly argued, the wholehearted co-operation of the Burmese people in economic rehabilitation would not be forthcoming, and the £80 million loan, which might look generous in Whitehall, would be regarded in Rangoon as a "disguised war indemnity," ultimately putting on Burmese shoulders the cost of making good the ravages of war, and in the meantime providing a market for British goods to be sold, at prices fixed in London, by the very same agents who controlled Burmese trade in the pre-1941 period. How can the politically awakened Burmans feel other than suspicious of the Government when they see in Rangoon the same business representatives, the same Governor-General with the same Royal salute, the same guard of honour dazzling in the same white uniforms? The official description adds the finishing touch that he had "returned where he belonged." It is to be hoped that the Government will lose no time in sending out to Burma a high-level delegation to speed up self-government. Only so can the friendship of the Burmese people be retained.

No Other Party

The Labour Party Executive now proposes, i addition to the rejection of the application of th Communist Party and the I.L.P. for affiliation, t urge the Party Conference to write into i Constitution a new clause definitely ruling out th affiliation of any separately organised *party.* good deal depends on the actual wording, whic has not yet been disclosed. For example, if applies to local affiliation, what is to happen to th numerous branches of the Co-operative Part that are already affiliated to divisional Labo Parties? The Labour Party Executive can hardl wish to turn them out; indeed, it is at prese negotiating with the Co-operative Movement new agreement regulating the local relatio between the two bodies on lines which seem to pr suppose a continuance of affiliation where th Co-operative Party desires it. If the Labo Party Executive's proposal is to apply only *national* affiliation, the question remains—what is a party? Is it to be defined as a body which puts forward a political programme of its own, or as one that runs candidates of its own (and, if so, nationally, or locally, or both?), or again as a body that both puts forward its own candidates and formulates its own programme? Under some of these definitions, we can imagine such bodies as the Fabian Society or the Socialist Medical Association being ruled out, whereas others would leave their position unaffected. Clearly the matter is of a good deal of importance. There is much to be said for the view that a body cannot expect to be allowed both to belong to the Labour Party and to run candidates of its own apart from the party; but anything going beyond this would be fraught with dangers to independence of thought and research within a party whose federal structure clearly requires some independent provision for Socialist theory and pioneering research.

Wage Policy

The General Council of the T.U.C. has developed a habit of snorting like an old war-horse whenever it hears the words "national wage policy." There has been a good deal more snorting during the past week, in response to comments on what was said in the General Council's recent manifesto; but we are still not quite clear what all the trouble is about. It all sounds as if the T.U.C. supposed a "national wage policy" to mean a suspension of all the regular practices of collective bargaining and a resort instead to State fixing of wages in all trades, accompanied by the compulsory direction of labour. No one we know of has suggested anything even remotely resembling this. No doubt, some of those who use the words "national wage policy" do imply that the chief purpose of such a policy would be to keep wage increases in check; and no doubt some who urge this also want as many as possible of the controls over prices removed. Needless to say, we have no sympathy with such an attitude; but, all the same, we see the need for more "wage policy" than is to be found in a mere reliance on sectional bargaining. It will hardly be denied that it is indispensable both to improve wage conditions in a number of essential trades which are both relatively underpaid and critically short of labour, and to consider seriously the question of inducements to higher output, on which the success of the present Government's programme of semi-Socialism is bound to depend. To deal with these matters by purely sectional bargaining does not seem a very hopeful course; and we had hoped that the T.U.C. would be ready to play a part in tackling them, in co-operation with the Government, on a broader basis. The rest of the General Council's manifesto is plainly meant to be co-operative: so why shy at a suggestion that seems to be fully in line with the maintenance of collective bargaining, and indeed to be simply an extension of it?

The B.B.C. and Its Governors

The names of the five new Governors of the B.B.C. appointed in place of those whose five-year term expires this spring are discouraging to anyone who hoped that the Government would take steps to reinvigorate the Corporation before its Charter is renewed. If the spur of competitive commercial broadcasting is not to be applied to the B.B.C., and if its present monopolistic functions are to be exercised in the name of a governing body which is not answerable through a Minister to Parliament, then there is an irresistible case for including among the Governors both people who will insist upon a high standard in the entertainment and cultural spheres, and men and women in touch with the mass of listeners and sympathetic to the progressive purposes of democratic government. These qualities are not to be found in the new Governors; they are safe, colourless and eminently respectable.

PARLIAMENT

Wednesday

Despite frosty chills on the food front, the Budget brought a welcome breath of Spring into the House. Neither Mr. Attlee nor Sir Ben Smith tried to embellish the grim picture of the world food shortage; but both rejected the charge that the administration lacked urgency or efficiency in dealing with its problems. Hudson opened for the Tories with a sombre and forensically brilliant indictment of the Government's food policy which caused some uneasiness on the Government benches. Haden-Guest and Sir John Boyd-Orr were early correctives—the one by pointing out the wartime origins of the world shortage, the other by urging the use of international instruments to repair it.

Only at one point did the high level of debate sink, when Lord Winterton called for an adjournment "to call attention to the prolonged absence of the responsible Minister in charge." The Prime Minister, pointing out that the Minister had been in the House until quite a short time ago, said of the intervention that he had "never known such an instance of discourtesy." The Noble Lord, who amuses himself easily, laughed it off, unsuccessfully.

Sir Ben Smith's winding-up was forthright and reassuring. Like the second husband of a former widow who is constantly referring to the virtues of her first husband, Sir Ben could be excused for some irritation at the Opposition's persistently unfavourable comparison of himself with the departed Lord Woolton.

"The facts are," said Sir Ben, "that he (Lord Woolton) did not have to buy a pennyworth of food; it all came over on Lend-Lease."

Despite the end of U-boat warfare, it is harder for a Food Minister to import food to-day than it was in 1944.

The debate on agriculture continued the debate on food. Hudson, attacking the Government for the negligence of past Tory Governments, was less convincing than in the food debate. As Mitchison of Kettering pointed out, Hudson, after finding that there was really nothing to be said against the Minister of Agriculture, commiserated with him, and turned his attack against a list of other Ministers—the Minister of Health, the Minister of Works, the Secretary of State for War, the Minister of Supply and the Minister of Education ("What about Ernie Bevin?" said a voice).

One of the most interesting Adjournment Motions for some time was Christopher Shawcross's speech on the reform of the motor industry. As a Parliamentary performance, it was unique both in length and substance.

In three-quarters of an hour, Shawcross made a slashing progress through the *maquis* of the motor industry. His speech, which has caused considerable offence among the manufacturers, was answered with customary moderation by Arthur Woodburn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Supply. More, no doubt, will be heard of Shawcross's criticisms when Midland M.P.s raise the question of motor taxation during the Budget debates.

The Budget itself has confirmed the popularity of the Chancellor in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Unostentatious, discreet, wise, practical, beneficent—they are the adjectives which describe the Budget and commend themselves to those who look for tidy housekeeping in the national Exchequer. But, listening to the Chancellor—and in particular to his peroration—no one could ignore that through the figures of debit and credit runs a Socialist idea.

Dalton's Spring Budget has blown away the winter fog of doubt which the Tories had engendered in the country.

Phineas Minor

AN ASTUTE BUDGET

If there were few surprises in Mr. Dalton's Budget, it was because he had marked out in his interim statement last October the broad objectives of his fiscal policy for the post-war transitional period. These targets were, in order of priority, the avoidance of inflation, the provision of "added incentives" to greater effort, and the distribution, with an impartial hand, of such further favours as were practicable. This policy the Chancellor has now pursued in a Budget to which astuteness is the epithet fittingly applicable. By bringing into account certain capital items of revenue, the technical deficit is reduced to a figure calculated to create abroad a reassuring impression of Britain's financial stability; the temptation to court popularity by remission of taxation on a scale likely to produce an inflationary demand for scarce goods has been wisely resisted; further encouragement to increased effort on the part both of worker and entrepreneur has been provided in the partial restoration of the pre-war earned income allowance, in the modest increase in the married women's earned income relief, and in the repeal of E.P.T. at the end of the year. And, finally, there is a little deftly spread jam in the abatement of purchase tax on some household articles, the reduction of entertainment tax on some popular outdoor sports, and in the repayment of post-war income tax credits for the elderly.

Regarded as an interim financial plan for a period of reconversion in which terminal charges arising out of the war are still colossal and the volume of goods available for domestic consumption is still restricted — to say nothing of the uncertainty still attaching to the dollar loan and Britain's foreign balance of payments—the Budget merited its good reception. The real test of Mr. Dalton's fiscal policy will come next year, when his proposals will be scrutinised for definite evidence whether he intends, when he has greater scope for tax changes and has had more time for the formulation of an overall plan, both to implement fully the policy of encouraging effort by the active producer and to extend the use of taxation as a method of achieving more equitable distribution of incomes on Socialist lines. As matters stand, the principle of "added incentives" has by no means yet been carried to its due conclusion. Inhibited by his decision last October to give all incomes, earned and unearned, up to £2,500 a year the benefit of a shilling reduction in the standard rate of tax, the Chancellor has been unable to make adequate restoration in the rates either of children's or earned income allowances; this should be a priority in the next Budget. In addition, we trust that by next year, Mr. Dalton will be able so to revise P.A.Y.E. that its sudden incidence on given levels of income does not act so severely as a deterrent on incentive.

Finally, we have yet to learn what the Chancellor's long-term views are on the appropriate relation between direct and indirect taxation. As a defensive measure against inflation the retention of purchase tax at its present level is sound, but we read with some disquietude Mr. Dalton's statement that "the purchase tax has got to stay . . . to help pay the bill for social betterment." As a permanent feature in the Budget, regressive indirect taxation bringing in £1,200 millions annually would be open to serious criticism from the Socialist standpoint. Against this we have in the current year a commendable scaling up of the duty on large deceased estates—an indication, we trust, of an intention to place the cost of social services increasingly on shoulders best able to bear them. Furthermore, in repealing E.P.T. (a tax for whose demise in an economy still largely made up of private enterprise there is much to be said), the Chancellor has indicated that he still has in mind the eventual imposition of some form of taxation on swollen corporative profits. In short, the Budget tides things over neatly in the present initial phase of the Labour Government's approach to Socialism. As the cautious and adroit purse-keeper to gradualism, Mr. Dalton remains free from irrevocable commitments.

IN THE BURNS' COUNTRY

South Ayrshire, Robert Burns' country, is a good place to get a short view of the post-war hangover. Not that it presents any of the post-war problems in an outstanding degree; it has most of them on a minor scale. It is a diversified country—part plain, part moorland; with long-established traditions of farming, mining and fishing; not lacking in industries, but hardly industrialised; drawing each summer its tribute from Clydeside's holiday-makers. At Prestwick it has a first-class golf-course and airport.

By the war some of the older industries (metal-stamping and casting, mining, ship repairs) were directly stimulated. Others (hosiery, carpets at Ayr, lace in the Irvine valley) were "concentrated," and gave up some or all of their space to engineering. Imperial Chemical Industries built at Girvan a new explosives plant. Farm prices were good enough to enable farmers to adjust themselves to new conditions. Above all, Prestwick Airport expanded rapidly from its modest beginnings in 1936 and became a giant in its kind. Even the seaside landladies were not left disconsolate; transferred workers and evacuees replaced the holiday-makers and, if less profitable by the week, stayed the year round.

To-day, the I.C.I. have closed down at Girvan. The war-time firms are gone from the lace and hosiery plants, and the now "unconcentrated" owners find it, for lack of raw material, slow work to recover lost momentum. A metal company which came to Ayr, displacing carpets, is to move soon to Kilmarnock, in North Ayrshire; Kilmarnock lies just within, Ayr just outside, the Scottish Development Area. (It will be missed in Ayr; it brought not only work but a humane and welcome interest in personnel management, and broke some new ground in finding suitable work for disabled men—it successfully absorbed five totally blind men as machine operators.) The labour force at Prestwick Airport, six thousand strong at the peak, is in process of dropping now to two thousand.

Things are not too bad. But the more thoughtful citizens realise the need for some new blood, some fresh drive or purpose in life, to bring Ayrshire again into the full tide of activity. The less thoughtful, uneasily conscious of the slackened pulse of things, begin to fall back into apathy and scepticism and canny individualism, the "between-the-wars" mind come again.

Of this process of deflation and disillusion, the story of Prestwick Airport is the epitome. At the peak of the war a thousand pilots and passengers were arriving every day; sometimes sixty aircraft alighted in an hour; there were 5,200 men and women in the workshops, and over a thousand engaged in servicing and administration. That was too good to last, of course. The torrent of bombers stopped with the need for them. The workshops, with dwindling strength, turned to adapting Liberators and Dakotas to civil purposes. Prestwick began to look for its future to the continuation of the American, and the development of British, commercial services. But the Americans switched to Rineanna in Eire, and the White Paper of December, 1945 ("Certain of our transatlantic services to be operated via Prestwick") was read by Scots as assigning to Prestwick a definitely subordinate part in the national system.* To them, confident that Prestwick was as good an airport as Heath Row will ever be (let alone Hurn), and could in fair competition attract more traffic than any southern field, it seemed unfair that Prestwick should be set to play second fiddle on *a priori* grounds, and without any trial of strength. And when Lord Winster said in the Lords on February 14th, as he was bound to do, that competition between Prestwick and Heath Row would be "contrary to the declared policy of the Government," many Scots besides the protesting peers saw in this an unjustified throttling down of Scottish development, for England's benefit. It is not so much a sentiment of private against public enterprise, as of Scottish enterprise against English (or even London) control.

As inevitable, and as disappointing, was the closing of the I.C.I. plant at Girvan, which had at last brought solid work to two communities much in need of it—Maybole, once a great place to make boots, but that business is mostly lost now; and Girvan itself, a seaside resort with a lop-sided economy, for letting lodgings makes little work for able-bodied men. Now Girvan has three or four hundred out, Maybole rather more, with little prospect of local employment. The scale is too small for heroic measures. Girvan indeed has a novel industry, the extraction of alginic acid from seaweed; it employs less than a hundred now, but may extend. But to put these outlying places firmly on their feet needs half a dozen such enterprises.

Farming in Ayrshire is mainly dairying, with some sheep and potatoes. Arable land is ploughed more to grow food for cows than directly for men. For a high milk-yield, the farmers relied on imported feeding stuffs, especially maize. These stopped when war began, and milk yields fell rapidly. Locally grown cereals, roots and grass silage were gradually substituted for imported foods. That meant dedicating still more land for growing cattle-feed—done in part by eliminating low-ground sheep (only hill sheep are kept in Ayrshire now) and partly by grazing cattle higher, thus releasing more grass for the plough. There was very little of ploughing up and re-seeding mountain pastures, as in Wales; it was rather a redraining and recovery of old pastures fallen out of use. By these means, Ayrshire farmers brought back milk yields to something near their old level, with rather more cows. One interesting new point has emerged in the process. There is a general opinion that, fed on home-grown stuffs, the cattle live longer, lose fewer calves at birth, and are generally healthier (especially in freedom from white scour and mastitis) than of old.

The farmers' chief trouble, here as elsewhere, is labour. The Essential Work Order has kept the old workers on the land, but there have been few recruits among school-leavers. The deterrent is not so much low wages as long hours. A vicious circle has grown up; the number of cowmen is too small to afford reliefs, so they are working seven days a week, and the seven-day week scares off possible reliefs. Some farmers meet the difficulty by acting as their own cowmen, and using the employed men on jobs which give them some time off.

Ayr has experienced the same welling up of cultural and social interests as many other places. The Saltire Society, founded in Edinburgh two years ago to promote literature, dancing and music, has a strong and active branch here. The Ayr Guildry started a rest-room for soldiers, which has grown into a social centre for troops and civilians alike, with lectures on all kinds of public affairs. There are two orchestras, one for classical music, one for reels and strathspeys. A powerful Burns' Club gives prizes to school-children for singing and reciting the works of Burns—offsetting the enterprise of a local cinema, which offered prizes to boys for essays on the career of Dillinger. The County Education Department has set about organising clubs for young people (sporting, handicrafts, education) to such purpose that two-thirds of all the "14-to-20s" in the county are now enrolled in one or more of the five hundred organisations active.

There has been a big rise in the demand for secondary education. The seven-hundred-year-old Ayr Academy held 950 children before the war; now it takes 1,150; each year's intake is up by a third. There is a marked swing towards the more "intellectual" subjects—science and mathematics rather than engineering for the senior boys, music and art rather than domestic science for the girls. Perhaps this reflects fashion and the social aspiration of parents more than the genuine interest of the children—the general swing towards "black-coated" work. Few, strangely, wish to become teachers.

The County has also been active in adult education, and run here many classes of the kind commonly provided by the W.E.A. These tend, however, to be rather more cultural and less political-economic in content than most W.E.A. programmes, and to attract a more middle-class attendance. I heard of a mining village where young miners would have liked to attend, but were embarrassed or scared off by the fear that the company would be too genteel for them.

Ayrshire has turned out two great men in the last two centuries—Burns and Keir Hardie. It would do no harm if some of the attention lavished on the earlier prophet were diverted to the later one. They might end by getting more out of Burns, too.

Patrick Monkhouse

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* At the Air Route conference held recently in Dublin, none of the 28 transatlantic services proposed by the British delegates for 1946-8 are routed by Prestwick; Canadian services will be.

HUNGRY GERMANY

Essen, April 8th.

I have been this morning to Villa Hügel, outside Essen, one of the homes of the Krupp family. It stands intact, a monument to everything I hate in Imperial Germany. The architecture is preposterous, massive to the point of caricature; dark panelling offset as well as it can be by vast chandeliers hanging on chains heavy enough to bind all Germany. The huge entrance hall is hung with vast oil paintings of the Kaiser, Bismarck, the original Krupp and his descendants, riding horses or sitting in immaculate family groups. This house is now the headquarters of the North German Coal Control. British officers and technicians pass busily through the halls and passages, concerned, as old Krupp I was, only with increasing coal production. But the British have no profits in mind. They know that their whole administration depends for its success on Ruhr coal. Hence they are bitterly troubled by the recent food cuts which have almost overnight reduced the mounting coal production by 17 per cent.

I was taken to one of the smashed mines which had been restored to a daily production of about 1,000 tons. Its pre-war production was 2,500 tons. Now it has fallen to 800 tons. The reason was easy to see. The civilian ration is rather over one thousand calories, on which people cannot live. They must get something more from the countryside. The wives and families of the miners have only the civilian ration, and the miners take days off to get extra food if they can find it. Also miners save part of their extra heavy workers' rations for their families, and are too weak to do a full day's work. I watched the distribution of the mid-day meal. It was one litre of good barley soup without bread. Some days it contains some meat. But it is not a meal for a miner. Also in the morning an underground miner takes with him three slices of bread with a piece of sausage. Even if they eat it themselves, they are not too adequately fed. But everyone agrees that much of the fall in production is psychological; the miners worked hard and were suddenly told their family rations would be reduced by a third. The Control tries to restore confidence and production with truthful propaganda to show that all Germany's food and future depends on coal, as in fact it does. How far this can succeed unless the Ruhr has more food no one knows, and there is much alarm lest the Communists may gain from this situation.

Max Reimann made a strong speech in Iserlohn last night. He is the ablest local Communist speaker, and it is easy in these circumstances for Communists to say that Russia does better and feeds Germans well; that British capitalism is inefficient, and that Germany's hope lies in a Communist and Soviet Germany. I have met no English officer or administrator here who does not regard the food cuts as disastrous, and who does not demand that food be increased.

Kingsley Martin

A NORDIC DIARY

If you fly to Stockholm you touch down at Gothenburg and spend half an hour or so in the sunny little café-and-customs-house on the edge of the airfield. How civilised of the Swedes, I felt, thus to assuage the rigours of bureaucratic control with the creamy amenities of pre-war pastry! It was a brilliant Sunday morning, and the local boys and girls, at once sensible and handsome in their ski-ing jerkins and fur hats, had strolled across the snow to amuse themselves by staring at the foreign animals. Conscious under their blue gaze of our own prosaic and subfusc appearance, we shuffled patiently from window to window, from official to official, pleased, as the English always are, by the mere excitement of getting out of England, and making the little jokes that the English always make about unfamiliar languages; for instance, about that large and unused window mysteriously labelled GODSEXPEDITION.

* * *

This is an unpolitical diary; my business in Stockholm was purely musical. At night I went to concerts and operas; and a great part of the days, too, I spent in the Opera House, watching rehearsals of *Peter Grimes*—long rehearsals followed by meals at the most improbable hours, which were themselves prolonged by immense dollops of international musical gossip. Outside this world I was simply a tripper, with all a tripper's joy in getting what he can't get and doing what he can't do at home: going for long walks on the frozen reaches of the Baltic, buying unrationed clothes, eating rationed (but apparently plentiful) food. The greatest novelty of all was the discovery that, when you press the bell in your hotel bedroom, someone immediately comes! As for the lovely city itself, it is probably, in Baedeker's phrase, "best by evening light": the intrinsic beauty of the buildings is not so striking as their setting—one remembers them standing in handsome isolation from one another; and in the blue dusk, when the multi-coloured lights come out and repeat themselves in the blue water, the traveller is fairly bewitched. Along the streets, too, the neon lights seem curiously superior to those of other cities, principally, no doubt, because in the matter of elevation and design they harmonise so happily together—though whether this is the result of instinctive good taste or of compulsory planning is more than I can say.

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The high Swedish standard of life stares the least perceptive traveller in the face. Doubtless it suited Germany's book to import iron ore from a neutral country rather than to extort it from a subjugated vassal, and Sweden has reaped the immense material benefits of this lucky chance. But it is also true that Swedish neutrality was of great value to Norway, with the immensely long and unsupervisable frontier between the two countries, and the firm tradition of mutual friendship that links them. I had been told that the Swedes sometimes adopt an infuriatingly moral pose about their neutrality, but of this I found no trace; on the contrary, they showed signs of the curious guilt felt by the unbombed. It is surely among the oddest features of our century that bombs should come to be regarded (even by their victims) as a species of moral correction, equivalent in the life of a city to corporal punishment in that of a boy: how often, during the war, did one hear red-faced men proclaim in trains: "What Edinburgh (or Shrewsbury, or Winchester) really needs is a few good bombs to wake them up." The Swedes have been neutral in two world wars, and are uneasily conscious that they have missed thereby something more than mere misery; they claim, for example, that isolation has accentuated their natural starchiness—a supposed characteristic which they are always inventing stories to prove. In one of these, some natural cataclysm (or, in more up-to-date versions, a super atom bomb) eliminates humanity except for a single Swedish man and a single Swedish girl. And so mankind survives? Not at all: there was no one left to introduce them.

* * *

Such is the Swedish view of their own national character, which they like to contrast with the temperamental easy-going nature of the Danes; very much as the English speak of themselves in relation to the Irish. But all such generalisations are dubious; and mixing with a society of artists, I certainly encountered no lack of geniality. I did, however, feel something tepid in the typical Swedish audience. To begin with, they don't fill the theatre. In Copenhagen, as in London, tickets are almost unprocurable; at Stockholm even the *première* of *Peter Grimes* was far from full. The cheapest seats were the emptiest, and this surprised me; on the rare occasions when something unfamiliar was given at Covent Garden before the war, I remember plenty of empty stalls, but always a packed gallery. To-day, I fancy, the house might well be sold out even for an unknown Swedish opera; and it is interesting to speculate about the reasons for our new-found curiosity about the unfamiliar. "You are all so revolutionary in England," said my Swedish friends; "you like Socialism, you like Russia, you even like Paul Klee; we can't keep up with you. Remember, we're still living in 1910: we've missed both the wars; you mustn't be hard on us if we find *Peter Grimes* a tough nut to crack." Is it really true, I wonder, that a city is better equipped to "take" Picasso and Alban Berg after it has stood up to the Luftwaffe, V1 and V2? If so, it's an expensive education.

* * *

Copenhagen doesn't show many scars of war. One is taken to see the remains of the astonishing R.A.F. precision raid on the Gestapo headquarters, there are some warehouses sabotaged by the Danish Resistance, and a number of pleasure-resorts which the Germans themselves destroyed by way of an awful warning. It's sad to see the Tivoli strewn with wreckage, but I was assured that it would open again this year; out along the Langelinie the Yacht Club Restaurant, where one could lunch so agreeably before the war, is totally ruined. But though there is little actual destruction, the unmistakable squalor of military occupation lies heavily upon the city; to come from Stockholm to Copenhagen is like changing from a pre-war Pullman to a Southampton leave-train. It will take money to restore the old standards, but in these days a food-producing country is assured of prosperity; it will also take much hard work, and that may prove a commodity less easily come by, for I was told on more than one occasion that the young people in Denmark won't work. Of course one hears the same story all over Europe, and the explanation usually advanced is a psychological one, but the Danes put it more simply: if the shops are empty, and you get four-fifths as much for doing nothing as for doing a menial sort of job, why work? An employer's view, perhaps; I had no chance of checking the figures.

* * *

All the eighteenth-century parts of Copenhagen seemed to be unharmed and even more beautiful than I had remembered them; indeed, the famous Amalienborg Square, the King's winter residence, has acquired a fresh attraction. During the German occupation the absence of traffic so delighted the King that he has forbidden its resumption since the liberation. So it is now in a cloistered quiet that the busbied sentries, two by two, take their measured and philosophic-looking stroll; they must be the only sentries in the world who are allowed to converse on their beat, and the result is not, as you might expect, an impression of slackness but rather a curious sort of dignity: the subject of their discourse, you feel, if not Kant, must at least be Clausewitz. A tiny symbol of that humane and sensible enlightenment which is on the decline elsewhere in Europe, and which is really the principal impression one retains of Nordic life; as uncongenial, of course, to some temperaments as it is satisfying to others. While we waited for the homeward aeroplane to take off, my Danish neighbour told me that the customs had impounded a steak which he had intended for hungry England. "And so you've lost it altogether?" "Oh, no, I telephoned to my wife, and she will get it back on application to the officials at the Dagmarhus." Yes, a world of enlightenment; and a long way removed from the poetry and corruption of the Mediterranean.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor

IN AT THE DEATH

[Austria still regards herself as a League Member . . . the legal and juridical aspects of this question are now being studied.—Geneva, April 8.]

The dead League's funeral
Draws Powers great and small
The shorn Assembly at the grave presides,
With rites appropriate
The body lies in state
Surrounded by repentant homicides;
But now the plea of Austria is heard
To join the martyred League about to be interred.

Not willingly seduced,
But brutally *anschlussed,*
She claims her place among Geneva's nations
To weep the League's decease
And grace the obsequies
With floral tribute and loud lamentations
And sit with mourning members in their seat
When they dish up Geneva's funeral baked meat.

So even in its shroud
The League is not allowed
Rest from the wrangles of its peevish prime,
For now Geneva's mourners,
Notorious adjourners,
Beside the grave adjourn for the last time,
Debating on what ground they may invite
A State the League expelled to join the burial rite.

Before the marble vault
Austria calls a halt
To nullify the League of Nation's curse.
What prestige would be hers
To join League Pall Bearers
And stand "among those present" by the hearse!
Though banished with Geneva's dying breath
Austria may still contrive to be in at the death.

Sagittarius

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Brinley Jenkins.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"It is not only criminal, but it is not fair, that you should go from this valley to steal coal in another valley. It is also unsporting." So said the Stipendiary Magistrate at Ystrad to-day to four Rhondda men summoned for stealing coal from a tip at Gilfach Goch.—*South Wales Echo.*

The women of this country have made great sacrifices by wearing coats without fur trimming. —*Women's Wear News.*

I have a hot cross bun which is about 45 years old. When I was a boy I put it in an old tea-caddy and when my father died I came into possession of the caddy with the bun still in it. It is as hard as a rock, but still in good state of preservation. Is this the oldest bun in the world?—Letter in *Daily Sketch.*

I felt sure this morning, that Lovely Cottage would win because, as I finished a cup of tea at breakfast, I looked at the leaves at the bottom, and saw his face as plain as could be.—*Daily Record.*

VIENNA

What has happened to this city? It isn't the damage. One would feel out of Europe and our time without the toothless rows of streets, the mounds of masonry blocking thoroughfares, and the skeletons of houses which now, in the spring gales, come crashing down all over the town, burying alive the other day a cart complete with coachman, mate, and horses. Unlike London, no building of historic value has been ruined irreparably; a glance into any courtyard may be rewarded by the sight of a baroque fountain. And the verdigris cupolas and stone saints silhouetted in the sky still give Vienna its particularly Southern papal splendour.

The colours and contours haven't changed nor, superficially, have the people; they are as facile and nimble as ever, a Teutónic version of the Italians. But their excessive courtesy, so embarrassing to the British soldier, would seem to spring from opportunism rather than their old tradition of politesse. For the Viennese are now as rude to each other and as rancorous to the Russians as they are sugary to the Western occupation troops. Their own language has become coarser, resembling a rural dialect. Their urbane graces have gone. These crowds milling in an ill-tempered search for food and rehabilitation as yet show few signs of a national revival such as is taking place in neighbouring Czechoslovakia. Yet, distinct from the inert, lugubrious masses there are in Vienna a dozen centres of activity, originating in the political parties, the administration, the cultural institutions, and the press, where contacts are eagerly sought with the outside world and the foundations laid for the second Austrian Republic.

The difficulties are immense, and not all of them can be laid at the Allies' door. There is the task of denazification which ultimately rests with the Austrians themselves, but has been badly prepared by legislation already put in force by the Provisional Government. The law ordering registration of all former Party members contains a loophole wide enough for almost any Nazi to slip through. For whoever "can plausibly make out that he has never abused his membership of the Nazi party or any of its military formations (SS, SA, NSKK, NSFK), and before Austria's liberation has proved himself to be favourably disposed towards an independent republic of Austria, may apply for permission to abstain from registering."

At the University, always a hotbed of Nazi ideology, fifty professors have been dismissed or pensioned off. But the resulting depletion of teachers is now used as an argument for their reinstatement, while no attempt is made to recall eminent scholars who have gone abroad. That in fact the purge hasn't been nearly drastic enough is proved, among other cases, by the retention of a well-known Nazi as rector of the Commercial College—his portrait in the rectorial office shows a blur where not so long ago a swastika badge was painted over. From the Austrian side one hears of favouritism in the zones, of the "rule of the Baronesses" with Nazi sympathies who have the ear of leading occupation officers. In the British zone one finds, perhaps, a tendency to prefer sincere fanatics to dishonest opportunists. When a waiter employed in an officers' mess, on being asked what had been his last profession, replied that he had been a "teacher of Nazi ideology," the C.O. exclaimed: "But I can't sack the only honest man in Vienna!" Others may be retained for fear of disrupting the administrative or economic structure by too hasty action. There is, however, no reason to think that the Austrians themselves are doing any better. In Carinthia, where of 80,000 Nazis, 9,000 had been traced and dealt with by the British, no more than 2,000 were added to the list since Austrian authorities took over.

The most burning problem, however, derives from quadripartite administration. Many instances have been reported of how commodities exported abroad from one particular zone cannot find their way into the rest of the country. But it is the grossly unfair manner of food distribution which makes the breakdown of the zones imperative. Vienna, with a third to a fourth of the country's population, fares infinitely worse than the rest. On paper, the city's rations are larger than those distributed in the British zone. In fact, it consumes about a third in calorific value. "You're lucky," I heard one Viennese say to another in the tram, "in our district we don't get any potato *ersatz* this week!" What they do get, and somehow contrive to live on, is a black coffee substitute commonly called "nigger sweat," black bread and rolls, dried peas, and dumplings. No meat, milk, fruit, potatoes or other vegetables for the average consumer. As a result, the political and administrative centre is drained of energy, the city roads remain unmended, bomb damage is not yet cleared away, and the young Viennese, most of them unemployed except in the Black Market, are driven into cynicism and contempt for the new Democracy.

The provinces, on the other hand, where rations are supplemented by local produce, seem able to support their population at an adequate level. Even in the Russian zone, which rumours make out to be reduced to famine, potatoes and meat were available when Vienna had none. There is no malnutrition in the American zone, nor in British-administered Styria and Carinthia. And this in spite of the fact that the large number of D.P. camps—in Carinthia a tenth of the population consists of mainly irrepatriable D.P.s—are supplied with preferential rations by the local burgomasters.

In the British zone, where conditions are very nearly normal, a number of industries have been restarted and an agricultural programme laid down which, subject to adequate seed supplies, should yield an appreciable harvest. It follows that to combat the apathy of the capital, a general levelling-out of rations throughout the country is needed, even if it means reducing standards in the rural parts. This development was in fact foreshadowed as a result of Unrra taking over Austria's food distribution as a whole. But, aware of the sad inadequacy of their resources, Unrra postponed assuming responsibility from month to month while unnecessarily raising the hopes of the Viennese by an avalanche of propaganda—not only to its own detriment but also to that of the Western Allies.

Political life in Vienna, therefore, is severely handicapped by the fact that so many of its citizens are exclusively concerned with the daily hunt for food. But the average Austrian has always suffered from a lack of political acumen. At the moment he is terrified by the prospect of another war, yet by ferquent attempts at wedge-driving between the Allies will do all he can to bring it nearer. No doubt the presence of the Soviet army weighs down heavily on the town; its soldiers are uncommunicative, sullen, naively excessive, and starved of luxuries which they will not hesitate to extort. They also practise graft openly where other troops may do it underhand. But no purpose is served by playing one occupying Power against the other—as was recently done when Russian soldiers appeared in the Vienna offices of the Danube Shipping Company, and an immediate appeal for intervention was made by telephone to the British authorities, much to their embarrassment.

Three factors emerge—the driving force of the Communist party which is now a small body brilliantly led; the failure, so far, of the Socialists to produce a new generation of leaders and a positive programme capable of rallying all progressive elements; and the composite make-up of the People's Party. This party not only contains the bulk of former Nazi sympathisers, it is also strongly under the influence of a handful of bankers and industrialists preparing to gain economic control in the country. Some of the party leaders, however, though politically inexperienced, are upright and public-spirited men who may yet join with the Left in devising a planned economy. At present things are in a state of suspended animation. Decisions are delayed in the hope of an early end of military occupation. Whenever that may be, I have heard the hope expressed that another general election be held before the final departure of Allied troops. This would, at any rate, force the parties to come out in the open with a programme adapted to changed circumstances.

One cannot give a picture, however sketchy, of Austria to-day without a word about its cultural activities. Although they are still confined to small groups of people, it is among these people that a spiritual revival will originate. In this field also relations are happiest between Austrians and Allies, each of whom lends material support to a number of new ventures. Even party strife is less apparent here; the retention on the regrouped town council of the very able Councillor for Culture and National Education, Matejka, a Catholic who in the concentration camp joined the Communist party, was welcomed by his many friends of the Right. There is, of course, no shortage of paper in Austria, a timber-exporting country, and the number of publications runs into hundreds. Among them are two interesting literary monthlies, one of them, *Der Plan,* somewhat comparable to *Horizon,* the other, *Der Turm*—published by the People's Party—pursuing a neo-Catholic line influenced by Claudel and Maritain. A proof of the change in this formerly quite reactionary party is also the exhibition of Expressionist painters, including Kokoschka, which was arranged by its cultural association. The theatre is mainly concerned with ideological plays; Reinhardt's former playhouse produces Priestley and Thornton Wilder besides experimental plays by the Austrian Weigel and Bert Brecht. The opera still seems to be the most perfect in Europe outside Italy. And a very hopeful sign for the future is the continued tradition of industrial art which has already produced a few exquisite samples for the export trade. The miracle of Austria's cultural rejuvenation is about to repeat itself once more. Whatever other claims for independent survival she may have, this is one of her best.

Hilde Spiel

SENSIBLE MEN: A REPLY

In the New Statesman and Nation of January 19th, 1946, appeared an article under the caption "Sensible Men?" The note of interrogation was superfluous. The article, obviously written by a disciple of New Zealand Socialism's evil genius, J. A. Lee, is characteristic of that gentleman's "white ant" tactics, which utterly failed to destroy the Labour Party in New Zealand, and which are now being transferred to the United Kingdom in the hope of destroying the British Labour Government. The best comment on the tactics is the statement made by the leader of the New Zealand Tory Opposition, when prior to the general election he said that after the election, with the help of Mr. J. A. Lee, his party would form the Government.

The writer said: "Power does corrupt, gradually in good men, but inevitably." This is an innuendo aimed primarily at Peter Fraser, but just as implicit in it are Clement Attlee and the leaders of the British Labour Party. What a worm is this to plant at the root of a seedling! If such a philosophy is in the teaching of the Labour movement, how can it hope to live? We can leave Labour in the United Kingdom to judge between Peter Fraser and J. A. Lee. The judgment will lie as it did in New Zealand.

"Finally J. A. Lee protested and was expelled from the Labour Party. Another member followed him, but the rest stayed in the name of unity with the vague and diminishing hope of reforming the party from within." So says Mr. G. Le F. Young. Let us look at this. Messrs. Lee and Young know quite well it is not true. Mr. Lee was expelled from the party for anonymously making virulent attacks on the then Prime Minister —a dying man—in the columns of the Opposition press. To save expulsion, he pleaded with the National Executive to forgive him, offering (1) to apologize to the Prime Minister, (2) to submit all his writings to the Executive for approval before publication. He said: "Gentlemen, if you kick me out the front door of the Party to-day, I shall be knocking at the back door to-morrow—I love it so." His pleadings prevailed. Immediately he dishonoured his promises, with the result that, on a motion from the floor of the next Annual Conference of the New Zealand Labour Party, he was expelled. "Another member followed him." This member was the Speaker of the House, who after being defeated on a motion he put before Caucus by 50 votes to 1, his own, left the Party, giving as his reason that it was not Democratic. Fifty to one—not Democratic! But let us look at this "other member." A lawyer, he was selected as Speaker of the House on the nomination of the Government, after being elected to Parliament through the exertions of the Labour Party in support of which he pledged himself to his constituents in Napier. As Speaker it was his duty to defend the honour and usages of Parliament. But, instead, he continued to occupy the Speaker's chair, consistently but vainly advocating that New Zealand follow Great Britain's procedure and allow the Speaker to hold his seat unopposed at the elections, and he continued to misrepresent Napier. Messrs. Lee and Barnard formed the "Soldier-Democratic Labour Party," which contested seats in nearly every electorate at the general election.

Candidates deposit £10 with the Returning Officer as an earnest that the candidature is not merely frivolous. All the candidates of the new party, except Mr. Lee, forfeited their deposits owing to the paucity of the votes they polled. Mr. Lee himself, in a working-class constituency where he had been elected by a clear majority of 9,000 votes, in an electorate of about 14,000, now lost his seat, his Labour opponent, a tramway man, getting a clear majority of 6,000 votes over him and his Tory ally. "The other member," Mr. Barnard, Speaker of the House, had just prior to the election read the writing on the wall, and announced that he was not running under the ægis of the "Soldier, etc., Party," of which he was the Chairman, but as an independent candidate. However, his constituents dealt very faithfully with him, and he, too, lost his deposit, an official Labour member being elected. The Labour Government was handsomely returned to office, though it lost several seats, most of them through the split created by the renegades. However, it polled a larger vote than ever in the country, so there was no falling away of popular support. The electorate and the Party judged the Government and found it good.

Now what has this Government which Mr. Young "has weighed in the balance and found wanting" done? It found a people wasted by depression, and lifted it to security and happiness. Mr. Young tells us it was assisted by the recovery since 1935, of world markets. He did not say that the world markets were reserved for New Zealand; they weren't, nor did he say, as he should honestly have said, that in New Zealand but nowhere else in the world before the outbreak of the war there was no unemployment. So the New Zealand Labour Government has abolished unemployment and fear of unemployment. It has introduced a guaranteed family income—it long ago (1936) introduced the forty-hour week, and a Social Security scheme which is unequalled in the world. The widow and fatherless, the sick, the old, the young, the blind, the crippled, are all adequately provided for. It has nationalised the Reserve Bank, the principal Trading Bank, and the Airways. Its guaranteed price to the farmers gave these security and prosperity. It has developed secondary industries to an amazing extent. Under its guidance the birthrate has increased, the span of life lengthened and the people generally are better fed, clothed, housed and educated than anywhere else in the world. It conducted New Zealand's war effort in a manner known to all the world, and withal so stabilised costs that during the war period the cost of living rose only 13½ per cent., and that of the essentials, such as bread, meat, butter, milk, cheese, sugar and flour did not rise at all.

The Government Party is the New Zealand Labour Party—not the Socialist Party—though to the writer's knowledge every Cabinet Minister and every Member of Parliament is a convinced Socialist. Its ultimate object, which is the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, was re-affirmed at the last Annual Conference of the Labour Party. Towards this goal it presses forward discreetly, but by no means slowly, every year under a wise leadership which thoroughly enjoys the confidence of Party members. "These members," says Mr. Young, "are not sensible: they are craven." How myopic is such a vision! These members have courage enough to withstand the pressure, the blatant if spectacular claptrap of a disgruntled handful, and to settle down persistently and progressively to their task. They have succeeded in the pursuit of the policy laid down by the New Zealand Labour Party, and each year finds them closer to their ultimate goal. This they will attain without oppression or liquidation, but at the behest of a happy people, an enlightened electorate, for not the least part of their success has been the education of the people by preaching, precept and performance in the tenets of Socialism.

If there is any lesson, as Mr. Young thinks there is, for the members of the British Labour Party to learn from their comrades in New Zealand it is that the issue is greater than the individual. That is where Mr. Lee fell down. Cursed with inordinate ambition, the fact that he was not chosen as leader, nor even included in the Cabinet, gnawed into the vitals of his judgment, embittered him and provoked him to offer up the Socialist cause and the emancipation of the under-privileged to satisfy the spleen that urged him to pursue a personal feud. Of course, the members of the British Labour Party will, very properly, be ambitious, but they, paradoxically enough, will need to be disinterested. They must reconcile themselves to the fact that there is not, ever, plenty of room at the top. The philosophy which they teach, and which the world needs so much, is more important than the aggrandisement of the individual, and if the Labour Party is to fulfil its honourable function in Great Britain, or anywhere, its members must be individually and collectively loyal to its body.

Christchurch, N.Z. HARRY ARNOLD

BAOR PARTY CONVERSATION

"MY God, what an orgy they threw when old Jumbo went with the 24s."

"Margaret's O.C. says he *saw* them shooting from the car with their revolvers—just for fun."

"Then they started rolling the Colonel round the mess on his tummy."

"My dear, I *predicted* they'd raid the Amzoo. What a temptation!"

"Our Q. knows where to get gallons of Curaçao."

"I saw Pongo in Hamburg, spending money like marks."

"You can't get the real stuff now, only Epernay soda-water."

"No, he didn't mind. Said it did his liver good next day."

"Margaret's O.C. says he opened his watch and showed him the jewels, but the man only offered 15,000 marks."

"I prefer German gin. I know it *kills* some people—but you *can* get it."

"My God, there's Archy's do on the 13th. It'll be an orgy."

"George changed 14,000 marks in Brussels."

"Our Q. got in 50 bottles of apricot brandy."

"It was a Mongolian captain, about four feet high. Looked like a juvenile delinquent."

"Try tipping the Herr Ober. He likes Balkan Sobranie."

"If you can get it in your Field Cheque Book in *pounds*, you can always say you drew marks."

"Of course, if you can *stand* apricot brandy . . ."

"Then George went to Paris and found a Yank who gave him pounds for Belgian francs."

"Margaret's O.C. says he saw him throw away a gold fountain-pen, because it was out of ink."

"It hurts you to think of a great hulking guardsman with a IIIA Leica, when all he wants is a Brownie Box."

"I heard that one about a bicycle that had been punctured."

"When the 181st left Berlin, they sold off everything they had. Ruined the market."

"In Paris, they're selling marks in the street at three francs."

"Were you at Bimbo's orgy?"

"Players slumped to 3."

"They just poured out the drinks carefully, and then tipped them on the floor."

"You then change the marks officially at 12 francs. It's a sweet racket."

"George says he got his back in his raincoat pocket."

"Joe was offered 2.50. Of course, he refused to sell."

"Margaret's O.C. says they're putting typhus cases over the border at night."

"In Hamburg they're talking in millions now."

"They search every tenth man at Folkestone, on the demob. run."

"When we crossed the Rhine, the boys were selling Leicas at £20."

"Our Q. found the place literally stacked with kirsch."

"They gave us zakuski and vodka, and we just sat and smiled at each other."

"Now they want anything up to 25,000 marks."

"The poor bitch hadn't danced since the war began. Wasn't allowed."

"They're hotter in Brussels—stamp your pass and your book and practically brand your forehead."

"George says he felt he had a neon sign on his chest saying, 'Rolleiflex'"

"Well, his sergeant heard footsteps and someone said, 'Typhus.'"

"With an arrow flashing on and off, pointing to his left-hand pocket."

"She was half-Polish, so . . ."

"At the Country Club they've got all the Scotch in 8th Corps."

"Margaret's O.C. heard they'd built gun positions all down the belt."

"George says he was asked £150 on his Contax."

"You can draw 300 kroner in Hamburg, but see they don't stamp your pass."

"And underground airfields."

"Just declare your drink, old boy—sort of draw it out slowly—but show 'em the lot."

"Wait till they get down to 600 calories. You'll see the Leicas come out."

"George just let them keep it."

"The Burgomaster told him. He's quite a decent sort of Jerry, for a Jerry."

"Then when you get to Flensburg you draw another 300."

"My God, what an orgy this has turned out to be."

"Margaret's O.C. says they've got Communist Party brothels on the Alexanderplatz."

"Our Q. has bought an hotel near Ghent."

"Margaret's O.C. said they shoot without warning if you look interested."

"They aren't feeding anyone over 45.

"They . . ."

DONALD BULL

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BRAQUE AND ROUAULT

The Tate Gallery has reopened at last. Of its own possessions it is showing two big groups. One room has been hung with what are now Old Favourites, mostly French Post-Impressionists, dominated by the spacious serenity of Seurat's "Baignade"; another, with English romantics (will a psychologist explain to me the present epidemic of exhibitions on the romantic theme?) equally dominated by an enormous newly-acquired John Martin in which a fine collection of sulphurous fires, cataracts, hurricanes and oak-cleaving thunderbolts is cracking nature's moulds and spilling all but a handful of terrified germins, retained by Martin in order to furnish his foreground. It requires no psychologist to note the contrast between Seurat and Martin and point the obvious moral.

The Tate is also giving house room to three other exhibitions. The Arts Council has put on a show of fifty or so watercolours by Cézanne, appropriately hung in the octagonal Blake room. The British Council contributes a comprehensive selection of paintings by Braque and of paintings and aquatints by Rouault. Finally, Mr. Vincent Massey has lent his own collection of contemporary British pictures before it goes with him to Canada. So there is something here for everybody. Outraged sensibilities can easily calm themselves down by moving into the next room. Cézanne-haters (I assure you they still exist) can fly to Benjamin Haydon for comfort while the anti-Braque party solaces itself with Cézanne.

Meanwhile the critic is bewildered. His duty calls him to Braque and Rouault, yet the Old Favourites seem to need a little revaluation and the Cézanne octagon acts like a magnet. Half an hour passes like a flash in company with these inscrutable fragments. Surely never did so little paint hold so much meaning. And yet—but there is nothing new to be said about Cézanne, and plenty to say about Braque and Rouault.

After an interval of years familiar artists take on a new complexion, especially when they are as truly contemporary as Braque. Surprisingly, I found myself disappointed. Those exquisite refinements of colour-juxtaposition, those crisp, fluent rhythms, that easy charm—are they quite enough? Art for art's sake is a meaningless phrase. You can't have a grin without any cat at all to hold it in place. But Braque's art is very nearly for art's sake. The first delightful shock wears off too quickly. And I find that to-day it wears off more quickly than six years ago. Moreover, the rhythms are not as crisp as they were. The curves are a shade more glutinous. There lies the danger for the art-for-art's-saker. If he falls, ever so little, out of love with art, the tension on which his whole picture depends, relaxes.

It is here that Rouault scores. Rouault's grin is, of course, not nearly as endearing as Braque's, but there is always an admirably solid cat behind it. The secret of Rouault's greatness is that he can retain his emotional urgency, religious, satirical, tragic or merely grave, and yet never forget that paint is lovely stuff in its own right. He has a double strength, and therefore his work is full of strange overtones. Also, unlike Braque, he never permits himself to be decorative. The rich patterning of his surfaces only comes into being because it is the appropriate clothing for his mood.

Eric Newton

MUSIC

"Sir John in Love," at Sadler's Wells

A colleague cheerfully measures this innocent frolic of Vaughan Williams against *Die Meistersinger*: "every bit as rich, mature, virile, and masterly; it has the same broad, golden flow of invention." Well, if you want to make the composer—and English music as a whole—look really silly, that's the way to do it. It was evident on the first night that *Sir John in Love* is one of those works which divide the musical world into two camps; but surely, even if you enrol among the sheep, comparison with *Meistersinger* is pitching it a bit high? Seen from among the goats, *Sir John* is a feeble attempt to do what has already been done not at all badly by Nicolai, and once and for all by Verdi. There are lyrical oases (it is always nice to hear *Greensleeves*), and one capital scene—the reading of the two letters; but the *verbatim* setting of long stretches of the original text seldom builds up into any sort of structure, and never attains real dramatic tension. We jog along cheerfully with a liberal admixture of folk-tunes and folk-like-tunes; and in our pleasure at the general "Englishness" are supposed to forget all about Verdi (but how can we, when Ford begins to nurse his jealousy, or Anne Page to summon the fairies?). Except for the Ford of Howell Glynne, the performance lacked distinction, and the producer managed to include every specimen of funny business known to the trade. The unspeakable settings are ascribed to "Bagnall"; no doubt a firm, for it is hard to believe that a single designer could have invented *all* the horrors concentrated within Ford's house. Why do Sadler's Wells insist on making their opera sets such a torment to the eye? It's not a question of expense: their ballet productions always look quite nice.

Albert Ferber, at the Wigmore Hall

This young Swiss pianist, who has been living in England throughout the war, showed in a recent Wigmore Hall recital that he has made himself into an artist of considerable achievement; and a large audience appeared fully conscious of this fact. His playing is innately musical and thoroughly thought out bar by bar; in fact, he is an intellectual pianist, but not at all a dry one. A Bach Toccata revealed the wide range of his tone colour and the freedom and suppleness of his phrasing; and the very difficult Beethoven Sonata known as *Les Adieux* displayed his mastery of technique and intense sensibility to the poetic idea involved. There was perhaps not all the spontaneity one could have desired in his conception of the "little" Schubert A major Sonata; but here, too, the actual quality of the piano tone remained always delicious to the ear—a merit rarer than it should be. Mr. Ferber is a pianist whose future career lovers of music would do well to watch.

D.S.-T.

Sakuntala. The part of the King's jester is played by Ronald Bruce and not, as erroneously given in our notice last week, by Ronald Prince.

RADIO NOTES

It would be nice to be able to pretend sincerely to the originality of finding Itma less funny than Variety's other programmes. For one's enjoyment of radio Variety depends entirely on the kind of joke to which one happens to respond. In Spain, for instance, mothers-in-law are thought an unsuitable subject for humour; in France, I seem to feel, Itma would be a flop; and American jokes about sex are very different from the type of innuendo which arouses the British snigger. Unless devised by Ted Kavanagh, Variety's jokes are all designed to hit haystacks. This may be well, if you are a haystack; but not otherwise. In any case, to pore critically over *Flotsam's Follies*, or *Monday Night at Eight*, or *Howdy Folks Again*, seems to me to show some lack of humour and proportion: these things just are what they are. But what is one to say of more ambitious ventures like "Musical Theatre of the Air"? Vapidity could scarcely go further. Let the rest be silence. For myself, I find the jokes in Children's Hour far wittier than those of Variety, and I am impressed besides by the unity and sureness of direction which inform that programme. Unlike most regular broadcasts, Children's Hour has all the comfortable vitality of the "going concern." This is also true of the Schools broadcasts and is becoming true of a series like "To Start You Talking," which must not be allowed to lapse. These discussions are the life-blood of topical radio, and the immaturity of the speakers adds to their value, so long as inexperience is not confused with mere stupidity. I have noticed a deplorable tendency on the part of the chairman to defer politely to the ignorant and cocksure opinions of some arrestingly blockish young man, merely because he happened to possess the fashionable prestige which attaches to manual labour.

Reverting to the subject of jokes, I thought both the West and London made April fools of us in a particularly brilliant way. Local patriotism took me first to the West, where I was enjoying Desmond Hawkins's Pirandellesque antics, when he suddenly carried the joke so far as to forsake the air altogether for several minutes, which gave me the opportunity to go over to Louis MacNeice. Here the orgy of Surrealism, was even wilder, with a field-day for Esmé Percy and coruscations of tennis-rally dialogue. I suspect that many listeners will have found the twists and turns of this extremely clever script as difficult to follow as I did; but after all it *was* April 1st and there must be at least one day in the year on which—Pippa-like—the B.B.C. goes on holiday in a body, is licensed to shove straws in its hair, to air all its private jokes, and generally to cock snooks at the public. Indeed, it were desirable that broadcasting should more often be like this: a fairly frequent dose of sheer dottiness is good for everyone, even when—as here—the nonsense is shot with shrewd punches at the characteristic follies of our day.

How to Move House. Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell less uproarious than usual, but more continuously and pointedly funny. A very neat catalogue of the mouldy miseries which lie in wait for those who must or will abide in our chaotic metropolis. Snapshots of the Undesirable Life, complete with the fussy mother-in-law, the unhelpful house-agent, the interfering neighbour, and—perhaps worst of all—the feelings of exasperated guilt with which one watches the elderly and asthmatic removal man shouldering a tallboy. It was all there—down to the old mackintosh which has mysteriously assumed the consistency of a dead octopus. At some risk of unfairness I must single out Gladys Young for her spifflicating sketch of a Central European *Hausfrau*.

Recommendations.—*Sunday, April 14th.* Return Journey (John and Rosamond Lehmann, 7 p.m.); The Challenge of Our Time (Benjamin Farrington, 9.15 p.m.).

Monday, 15th. A Famous Editor (Desmond MacCarthy, 6.20 p.m.); Concert (7.15 p.m.).

Tuesday, 16th. Brahms Concert (1.40 p.m.); Concert (7.30 p.m.); Sagas of Old Iceland (Nigel Balchin, 11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday, 17th. Brains in Brummagem (L.P., 10.40 a.m.); The Werewolf (Arthur Marshall, 8 p.m.).

Thursday, 18th. Griller String Quartet (7.15 p.m.); Conversation in a Train (8.10 p.m.); Jean Sablon (10.10 p.m.).

Friday, 19th. St. Matthew Passion (3 p.m. and 7 p.m.); William Cory (11.30 p.m.); Buxtehude (11.50 p.m.).

Saturday, 20th. Magic Flute (2.15 p.m.).

Edward Sackville West

THE MOVIES

"The Virginian," at the Plaza

More revivals, remakes. There is something to be said for remaking the good film every twenty years or so; some such process of renewal is even necessary if we are to look to the cinema for the permanence of certain themes. But I suggest two conditions. One, that the original film should have been such that we can regret its disappearance after twenty years; this would apply to comparatively few films, among which I should place *The Battleship Potemkin*, already dilapidated in manner, and (when the time comes) Clair's *Sous les toits de Paris* and *Le Million*. The second condition is that the remake should be as good as, if not better than, the original. It would be an impertinence, for example, if anyone except a clown of genius undertook in the future to give us new versions of *The Gold Rush* or *City Lights*; yet all who have seen those masterpieces must regret that with every year they drop further out of currency. Nothing more durable, let me add, than Chaplin fantasy has yet been produced by the screen; and the beginnings of it are almost gone already. The next generation, I am afraid, will have to do without Chaplin, or return to him in select societies on Sunday afternoons, as we do to the vanished splendours of Griffiths, Stroheim, and Pabst. *Kameradschaft* might well in a few years be remade by John Ford, and *Greed* by the talented director of *Goupi Mains Rouges*.

These daydreams, alas, have been engendered by nothing more than *The Virginian*, which fulfils neither of my conditions. It wasn't to begin with a film of more than average quality, and the present version seems to me a good deal tamer than need be. Between us and the original Westerns there intrudes that abominable talkie growth, the singing cowboy. He doesn't sing here, it's true, but he goes in for fancy dress, and of course he's heavily technicolored. Mr. Joel Macrea as hero wears a pretty line in blue-silk scarves and sports shirts, and Mr. Brian Donlevy's villain—lest we should find him too amiable—is tight in black from top to toe. The scenery—an attraction of such films—suffers from colour too, especially in the phosphoric moonlight. Still, there are some good moments with the cattle-rustling, the lynching, the final stalk round verandahs in the sunset. The chief trouble with *The Virginian* in its present form is that it offers us the Western half grown-up, bogged in adolescence. I can't imagine that either the schoolboy or the adult will find it unendurably thrilling.

At a time when new films are so scarce one can't help wondering why so many foreign films are held up interminably before we are allowed to see them. Among French films there is *Goupi Mains Rouges* (press-shown fifteen months ago), Marcel Carné's *Visiteur du Soir*, *La Duchesse de Langeais*, with dialogue by Giraudoux and music by Poulenc. Eisenstein's *Peter the Great*, I have been told, was completed some while ago and has claims to be considered his masterpiece. There are even English films that seem to have wandered on their way to the screen. What happened to *A Diary for Timothy* (Humphrey Jennings and E. M. Forster) which after being press-shown, never reached the public? And to return to French films—since there the supply seems generous—why was that brilliant documentary *Épaves* slipped in and out of the programme at the Curzon a few weeks ago under the title *Full Fathom Five* without a word, so far as I can make out, to the critics who might have welcomed it? Keep an eye open for *Full Fathom Five*, if it should come your way. This half-hour exploration of the wrecks and ocean-bed of the Mediterranean fulfils beautifully one of the cinema's main functions: to satisfy our longings for impossible travel.

William Whitebait

WAKING IN THE ATTIC BEDROOM

More innocently born and calmer seems,
In limpid haze,
This Sunday morning than all other days.
No early footsteps walk into my dreams,
A peace is everywhere
As if the whole created world believed in prayer—
Over the solitary wheat,
And down the village street,
And on my folded clothes across the chair.

Frances Cornford

Correspondence

BRITISH DIPLOMATS

Sir,—As the New Statesman published an article about the extent to which the British Legations in Europe serve as centres of Conservative opposition to the Governments of the countries to which they are accredited, I think you may care to publish the following facts.

The British Embassy in Warsaw has distributed the full text of Mr. Churchill's speech at Fulton to the Polish press in Warsaw. I have received cuttings from two Polish newspapers with the following comments on this strange action:

> *Zycie Warszawy.* 29.3.46.—We don't like it when Mr. Bevin criticises our Government. But we take it calmly because the situation is clear—he is the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom.
>
> But besides Mr. Bevin there are in the British State machinery lower officials of the diplomatic service, both at home and abroad. It is the latter who to-day are making us wonder how the British diplomatic machine works. So as to be perfectly specific let us say that what we are talking about is the British Embassy in Warsaw.
>
> What we want to know is whose Embassy is this? Because we are becoming more convinced every day that it does not represent the political attitude of Mr. Bevin. Even the British press is beginning to realise that some of the British Embassies in Europe do not represent H.M. Labour Government. [At this point *Zycie Warszawy* summarises the New Statesman article.]
>
> Whom then do they represent?
>
> A partial reply has been given recently by the Press Attaché of the British Embassy in Warsaw.
>
> This is a peculiar story. Mr. Churchill made a bellicose speech in the United States. The speech got a very bad reception all over the world, as every child knows. Mr. Bevin and the whole official British Labour press washed their hands of it most emphatically. Everyone knows that too. The speech was supported only by a few Conservative papers in good old England—and by the British Embassy in Warsaw, which sent the full text *in extenso* to all the editorial offices of Warsaw; a few enthusiasts were even distributing the speech in the Warsaw cafés.
>
> The reader may ask—what is there not clear about this?
>
> What is not clear is under whose orders is this Embassy. Is it the Embassy of H.M. Government or of H.M. Opposition?
>
> Another point not clear is whether a British diplomat can be more loyal to Churchill than to Bevin.

The official organ of the Polish Socialist Party, *Robotnik*, on March 28th writes that it should not be forgotten that at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences:

> The British Government and the remaining members of the Big Three defined Poland's new frontiers in the West. How can the assumption of these obligations by Great Britain be reconciled with the attitude of the British Embassy in Warsaw?
>
> The Embassy, for instance, has not hesitated to carry out a mass distribution of copies of Churchill's speech, in which the decisions of the Potsdam Conference on frontiers are violently attacked. Poland wants the best imaginable relations with Great Britain. Above all we do not want to forget that Britain is now led by a Socialist Government. But we would like the agents of the policy of this Government in our country to adopt an attitude in accordance with the views of the Party now governing Great Britain, and not with those of the leader of the Opposition.

I may add that I have been told for months by Polish friends, including highly placed members of the Government, that the British Ambassador in Warsaw has been continuously and closely associated with Mr. Mikolajczyk and has been subjecting him to every kind of pressure and persuasion to break with the Government Coalition and to make an independent bid for power in the election. Mr. Mikolajczyk was the person to whom the British funds for the Polish Underground (about £65,000,000 all told, in dollars) were entrusted. These funds were widely distributed in Poland. Mr. Bevin replied to a question in the House about the origin of the half-million dollars found recently on 16 Polish officers engaged in activities hostile to the Government, that he did not know, but a lot of dollars had gone to Poland for the Underground Movement.

This is not meant as an imputation against the way Mr. Mikolajczyk handled these funds, for there is no doubt of the patriotism with which he discharged his task. But it does mean to say that Mr. Mikolajczyk's political position largely rests on the extent to which he is looked upon as the repository of British political favour and support. Hence the seriousness of the Ambassador urging him to break with the Coalition. For the Right wing of Mr. Mikolajczyk's Peasant Party is now heavily loaded with reactionaries from the beaten Right in Poland.

The Labour members of the Parliamentary delegation who recently visited Poland were unanimous in testifying that success for the British policy of detaching the Peasant Party from the Coalition may be the signal for a civil war in Poland, and that the best hope for Polish democracy lies in encouraging a continuance of the Coalition until further progress has been made

Montgomery Hyde

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JONATHAN CAPE

with economic reconstruction and the restoration of order. Since they returned, the British and American Governments have tried to make political capital out of the state of semi-starvation in Poland by letting it be known that Unrra supplies to that country would be increased if Mikolajczyk became Prime Minister.

Is the Government's policy being sabotaged by our Embassy in Warsaw, or do the Government and Mr. Churchill see eye to eye in Poland? Is our policy in Europe one of "pin-prick intervention" against the Left, willing to wound but afraid to strike —except in Greece, where we have struck?

House of Commons, S.W.1. K. ZILLIACUS

MR. BEVIN AND FRANCO

SIR,—Mr. Whibley, in defending Mr. Bevin's Spanish policy, is merely resurrecting Non-Intervention. The case of Argentina is scarcely a fortunate one to cite in support of his argument. It is, of course, a beautiful example of the futility of wagging a monitorial finger *à la* Mr. Bevin and doing nothing to secure effective action. Argentina has not been subjected to severe joint action by the Great Powers. It is proposed that Spain should be.

Such action in the form of severing diplomatic relations, imposing economic sanctions and so on would hardly make Franco's position stronger economically. Nor is it at all likely to strengthen the regime politically. The manœuvres of the Monarchists since the end of the war reflect the fears that many of Franco's past supporters feel about the future of his regime in a democratic world. Decisive action by the Powers would not remove those fears; it would confirm them. Above all, such action would greatly strengthen the Resistance Movement and its allies among the people, for they would know at last that their friends outside Spain really mean business.

As for the Army, there is no reason to suppose that it will be free from the disaffection created by the knowledge that all the world is against the Fascist regime in Spain. In any case, from what sources is this Army to draw its men and resources to wage "a more bloody and hated Civil war" if the Great Powers are hostile to its cause? 1946 is not 1936 and even the Spanish Generals are probably aware of that.

And what is the alternative? Merely to say hard things in the House of Commons and go on buying oranges and sherry? That is exactly the policy which will drive democratic Spain to cynical despair and ensure the survival of a regime which Mr. Bevin and his supporters affect to detest. LEONARD PECK

69 Christchurch Road,
Tulse Hill, S.W.2.

DOCTORS AND THE PUBLIC

SIR,—One would hope that your contributor's article on "The Doctors and the Public" was sufficiently insulting to the intelligence of your readers to need no reply, but unfortunately there may be many who are ill-informed about the doctors' case, and who have not read the National Health Service Bill.

With the usual easy assumption that the British Medical Association, a model democratic body that takes a great deal of trouble to ascertain the views of its members, is of no importance, the writer asserts that "nobody yet knows" what the doctors want. He goes on to repeat the common calumny that opponents of the present scheme are activated solely by motives of monetary gain, usually an indication that the critic is himself incapable of conceiving any alternative. The Government's "financial generosity" could have been anticipated from the start. The bait for the selling out of personal freedom is a rich one and many will naturally fall for it.

The second of the seven Principles of the Profession is an important one—"The medical profession should remain free to exercise the art and science of medicine according to its traditions, standards and knowledge, the individual doctor retaining full responsibility for the care of the patient, freedom of judgment, action, speech and publication, without interference in his professional work." These freedoms, along with those of the patient, are, in the view of most of us, threatened by the new Bill, and in relation to the actual clauses your contributor's comments are grossly misleading. He does not say that of the members of the Central Council, the main advisory body (composition as yet unspecified), 35 out of 41 are appointed by the "Minister," while in relation to their annual report, that the "Minister" may, if he thinks fit, "refrain from laying that report or part" before Parliament, thus effectively stifling criticism and tying the hands of the Council in advance. At least three-fifths of the members of the Boards of teaching hospitals (composition as yet unspecified) are appointed directly or indirectly by the "Minister," while all the members of the Regional Hospital Boards (composition as yet unspecified) are appointed by the "Minister." Throughout the Bill the right to appeal, where it exists at all, is always and only to the "Minister," and this if you please is, in the view of your contributor, the danger of bureaucracy "reduced to a minimum."

The rest of the article is no less misleading and irrelevant. That the level of commentary should have fallen so far in a responsible journal is indeed a warning and a portent. How much more profitably might you have pointed out that the Bill will effectively prevent experiment and pioneer work of a kind as yet unacceptable to the majority and therefore to the bureaucrats and the "Minister"! A. S. Neill's Summerhill and the Caldecott Community escaped the net of the Education Act (save for subjection to "inspection") but the comparable clinics and hospitals are doomed.

The doctors will fight certain sections of the Bill (not the National Health Service, which they have been collectively advocating for many years) as they fought the war, to preserve their freedom to do for their patients what they believe to be right, without fear or favour of bureaucracy (i.e. the "Minister").

The Old Cottage, ALAN MABERLY
Hampstead, N.W.3.

EDWARD THOMPSON

SIR,—One reads that Dr. Edward Thompson, who has just attained his sixtieth year, is seriously ill and one infers that therefore he will not play any part in the all-important negotiations now proceeding between the representatives of the Government and the leaders of the several Indian Communities.

At such a moment it is proper to pay a tribute to Thompson who, for thirty years or so, has endeavoured in the face of much discouragement to arouse his countrymen to understand and sympathise with India, and who on one or two occasions has brought the two countries, by his unaided exertions, very near to agreement. His services, in mitigating at critical moments the bitterness of Indian leaders, have been of incalculable value to Great Britain and India.

If, as we hope, the negotiations in India succeed, Thompson's contribution to their success will be seen to be considerable. But for his intimate friendship with Gandhi and Nehru and the affection and trust with which both these eminent men regard him, relationships with India would be already past praying for. ANOTHER FRIEND OF INDIA

YALTA

SIR,—I would be grateful if you would allow me, through the courtesy of your columns, to make my apologies to Mr. Maurice Petherick. I read an article in the United States by Mr. Aneurin Bevan attacking certain of the provisions of the Yalta Agreement. But I was out of touch with the House of Commons. And in my letter I did Mr. Petherick and his supporters a serious injustice. ROBERT BOOTHBY.

House of Commons.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

> A moment later and we were ensconced in our leafy hiding-place. What better employment than waiting and watching on that idle spring afternoon. Not only our two blackbirds, but Dame Nature herself seemed in courting mood. While the male was "showing off" at the foot of our copse, the female seemed absorbed in the contemplation of a small brown butterfly. But suddenly she was up and away. The chase was on. Good-bye, Mrs. Blackbird!

Good-bye, we say too; and good-bye, surely, now and forever, to what everybody believes to be the most sterilising and inaccurate kind of writing in the world. But have we really got rid of it? The Good-bye-Mrs.-Blackbird, Up-pops-Mr.-Frog business may have departed along with the archness of the older type of Nature Film. The appearance of a new series for naturalists* is our cue for asking whether Mrs. Blackbirdism does not still exist in other guises.

At opposite ends of a century of natural history writing stand two great names: Gilbert White and W. H. Hudson. Two great naturalists—yet there is never a doubt which must be the model for our new natural history. Gilbert White is the perfect embodiment of the enquiring spirit of the older naturalists. White tried to be a good writer. Besides making careful little experiments with eighteenth-century verse, he took more pains with his prose and gave more thought to the readability of his famous book than casual readers may realise. But all is subservient to observation. His history is "pure." So that in spite of its adulteration in scores of gift-bookish editions, in spite of Gilbert White Clubs with tours to Selborne, pilgrimages to So-and-so, and birds-nesting for egg descendants of the original wood warbler, White's influence has led to enquiry. He has made his true disciples look.

We do Nature much more thoroughly nowadays. Even in wartime there are nature columns, nature weeklies, and a dozen nature books a month. Yet how prospers the spirit of White? The books are very well got up: so is the style in which they are written. In fact one of those must-be-all-right, our-English-heritage worlds has attached itself to the continent of Nature, writing round it with affectionately reverent annotation in much the same way as our great English writers are wrapped up in the world of Eng. Lit., as it has been called. Mrs. Blackbirdism may be dead; but it survives in at least half a dozen forms of Lit. Nat.

Except for the taint of inaccuracy from which it has never been able to escape, much natural history journalism is useful and inoffensive, although it is wrong to suggest, by concentrating on the King of Beasts and Denizens of the Deep (sharks and angler fish) that the most celebrated animals are the most interesting. But the "Not Generally Known," a popular division of this section, has nothing good to be said for it. Oddities of Natural History is just *Animated Nature* over again, without Goldsmith's gift for putting it into good English. A recent book discusses

> the age of geese . . . do golden-crested wrens cross the North Sea on the backs of owls, do adders swallow their young, do hedgehogs suck cows. . . .

Another relatively harmless group comes under the heading "Civil Servants' Week-end." Modest introductions, disclaiming scientific knowledge, are a prelude to accounts of pleasantly unambitious rambles where observations are recorded of that particular group of phenomena which has been most frequently observed by everybody else. Among the best of these is *The Charm of Birds*, by Grey of Fallodon, which certainly demonstrates the charm of Lord Grey. And maybe there are those who grow to make valuable observations from such unpretentious beginnings. Far from harmless, on the other hand, is the Literary Naturalist, who is stimulated by Nature into an orgy of hackneyed quotation. The rarest bird, the most fascinating plant, does nothing but "remind" him—of Wordsworth's daffodils, the light that never was, or a robin redbreast in a cage. Worst of all these Lit. Nat. men is the Neo-Hudsonian: for the sad fact must be faced that the influence of the second great name among popular naturalists, W. H. Hudson, was not a good one.

Hudson is a wonderful observer; there is careful painting in some of his descriptions and he spoke up, when such a voice was most needed, for the preservation of the wild species. It was a new voice, and it was an eloquent voice; but it was also long-winded, and it was self-conscious. There is padding, and the kind of padding which takes the form of reflections on the beauty of the scene. Of course, it is the weaker parts of their master which the neo-Hudsonians imitate. In the hands of an Hudsonian, a chapter on the fauna of Epping must begin (*v. England's Birds*), "There is only one forest for the Londoner," and it must go on "O the beauty of trees. Chestnuts already umber . . . the beeches in glory of gold, etc." Hudson's case for the preservation of wild life has evoked even a sub-type of unnatural naturalist, the *pylophobe*. This word signifies one who, in the most desolate country, is never properly himself until he has discovered a factory chimney or pylon, however distant, which he can stigmatise as a foul blot. All is written with the implication, so meaningless to any field biologist, that the farther nature is removed from mankind, the greater its richness and beauty. Yet what working naturalist would not prefer half an hour on an old municipal rubbish dump north of Kentish Town to a morning on Hay Tor? Blindness to the nature which is always at hand, and the general suggestion that man himself is not part of nature are the essence of the Hudsonian. Speaking for the lay public, I prefer the bleakly academic description of bird or plant to quite respectable poetic descriptions written in a tone of voice. Poems on the mating of eagles are not half so thrilling as Mr. Nethersole-Thompson's notes on the courting behaviour of the greenshank in *Witherby*. From verses on the innocence of the wild rose (*which* of the dozen British species and sub-species? and are they all equally innocent?) I turn not to soapy Hudsonism, but to the description of a particular variety in Bentham and Hooker or in Butcher. The wonderful word *Rosaceæ* at the head of the page suggests the broad outlines and the prevailing qualities. The detail, with rich botanical adjectives like "pubescent" or "hispid" or "glaucous" all set the visual imagination going. The wickedness of the impure natural history, with its mixture of purple patches, quotations, and embarrassing anthropomorphism, is that it attempts to do both your observation and imagining for you at second-hand. In fact, the reader of Fern Brixton's *Thoro' Bush, Thoro' Briar* or *Where Four Winds Meet* only enjoys them if he has never seen a gorse bush or climbed a hill.

Readers of the *New Naturalist*, on the contrary, must know nature at first hand, and must be in process of knowing it better. The style is traditional, in the enquiring spirit of White and Darwin, MacGillivray and the Hookers. There is nothing new, either, in the excellence of the photography. Camera specialists, helped by technical advances in kodachrome, have already made a brilliant return to "the photographing of ravens" which belonged to the "to-morrow" of Auden's poem on Spain. The colour is particularly good in the Butterfly book, though the illustrations are a little hampered by restriction to life size. The style of a still more recent work, not in this new series, *Butterflies and Moths in Britain*, verges on the improper. It includes frequent exhortations to the reader to "halt his caravan by the wayside and enjoy the sounds and scents" of whatever it is. But these impure books are often saved by their illustrations. Totally without a caravan, I can nevertheless enjoy Miss Temple's photographs, particularly as some are × 2 that most revealing of magnifications. (Compare her slight enlargement of the small tortoiseshell laying eggs on a stinging nettle with the same subject as illustrated in Mr. Ford's book, where the eggs are invisible.) It is pleasant also to see line drawings again in an age which misses, among all the blessings of contemporary paintings, the old power of the artist to make those detailed miniatures suitable for the Plates and *figs.* of scientific work. The photographs in the London book, though the colour is rather like colour in a dream, suggest by a brilliant choice of subjects the wild nature which lies under our petrol-filled noses. The jungle of speedwell and groundsel covering the allotments, say, off Bromley High Street; cabbages eaten to the bone by the larvae of *Pieris rapae*; coltsfoot or *Epilobium angustifolium* in the rocky clefts of the blitzed site opposite Woolworth's or where the Midland Bank used to be.

Neither of these new books is perfect. Any future volume must avoid the maddening scramble from text to index and back again which Mr. Ford makes us take whenever we want to refer to a picture. We are used to excellent photographs. The newness lies less in the detail than in the general attitude. One of the most stultifying things about bad popular nature writing is that it suggests that on one side of the fence are ourselves, the amateurs: and it equally encourages the academic specialist to maintain that on the other side of the fence is himself, the professional. In this new series it is taken for granted that all are working together, that all are amateurs. After all, so far as birds are concerned, for instance, there are only about eight professional ornithologists in Britain, who need an observer corps of a thousand volunteers to help them to maintain their knowledge even at its present level.

More striking still in these books is evidence of that shifting of the centre of gravity in the world of biology which has brought about a slow earthquake in the last twenty years. The word ecology partly expresses it, if we realise that this stands for something more widely embracing than the study of animal population or the growth of plant communities. The territory of London, its balance of life constantly shifted by man, perfectly illustrates the theme: but, less obviously notice how, in the Butterfly book, species are never considered separately for their own sake; they are described in their relationship with the life around them.

Recently I was walking in West Ross with an ornithological friend. Out of rough hillocks of Lewisian gneiss, small sandstone mountains rose abruptly. Where the sandstone began, the ground was broken into terraces and steep ledges; and here my friend told me to listen for the sound of a low and creepy whistle, regularly repeated. It was not long before we heard it—the ring-ouzel. But my friend seemed to take pleasure less in the identification of a not uncommon species than in the fact of its locality. In such a spot, often wild and solitary, the birds like to perch and survey the country from the decent height provided by the rocks. Its presence filled a gap in the complexity of plant and broken ground.

It is this tentative ability to see animals as part of a web of life, linked by stress and counterstress, which has brought to natural history a new sense of our ignorance, a feeling that there are large and unknown worlds to be explored; and from these books, instead of being made to feel that to the specialising naturalist at any rate, all, except for a few details, is as well known as it ever can be, we feel instead that to him particularly, wondering surmise is the prevailing emotion. Only on such conditions can the spirit of Gilbert White be rediscovered.

Stephen Potter

London's Natural History. By R. S. R. Fitter. *Butterflies.* By E. B. Ford. The New Naturalist Series, edited by James Fisher, Julian Huxley, John Gilmour and Dudley Stamp. *Collins.* 16s.

Butterflies and Moths in Britain. By Vere Temple. *Batsford.* 12s. 6d.

PROTESTANT BOY

The Midnight Court. By BRYAN MERRYMAN. Translated by FRANK O'CONNOR. *Fridberg.* 6*s.*

It would be impossible for an English reader who has no Gaelic to judge how successful Mr. Frank O'Connor's new version of *The Midnight Court* is as a translation; but as a poem it is as fresh and delicious as a crystal stream, and appearing at the moment it runs across the muddiness of most contemporary verse with babbling clarity and brightness. In a lively and extremely malicious preface, Mr. O'Connor tells us something about Merryman himself. He was born about the middle of the eighteenth century in a barbarous part of Ireland, and he contrived in some way or other to become well-versed in the writings of his English and French contemporaries. "In *The Midnight Court* he imitated contemporary English verse, and it is clear that he had resolved to cut adrift entirely from traditional Gaelic forms. His language—that is its principal glory — is also a complete break with literary Irish. It is the spoken Irish of Clare." How on earth Merryman reconciled a spoken language with the fashionable verse-forms of eighteenth century English Mr. O'Connor makes no effort to explain.

In fact, there is a certain *suppressio veri* in Mr. O'Connor's introduction. He does not tell us the curious fact that the original has one final and three internal rhymes in every line. It is rather difficult to imagine what this sounds like; in English (to construct a purely academic example) it would, one supposes, produce an effect something like:

> I need not feed my greed on crumpets,
> Nor must I trust my lust to stumpets.

This is no doubt very gay and springy in a language whose consonants are lighter than those of English, and which lends itself more gracefully than English to assonance rhymes; but even in Gaelic it presumably sounds a little too frivolous to be properly called classical. Mr. O'Connor wisely makes no effort to reproduce the technical virtuosity of the original, nor does he attempt a *pastiche* elegance. What impresses one in Mr. O'Connor's version is not anything that could be called classical or Georgian, but something one suspects to be strongly present in the original: a fresh racy mediævalism. Merryman's kind of prosodic play is not very far removed from the alliterative writers of the Middle Ages, and the fact that the poem is a dream-poem emphasises the mediævalism from a new angle. The opening (though little else) cannot fail to recall the opening of *Piers Plowman :*

> 'Twas my pleasure to walk in the river meadows
> In the thick of the dew and the morning shadows,
> At the edge of the woods in a deep defile,
> At peace with myself in the first sunshine.

And where the poem is not mediæval in character, it occurs to the reader of this translation that it is romantic rather than classical. Mr. O'Connor himself, speaking of Merryman's "great pæan in praise of bastards," says that "the bastard is used as a symbol of natural innocence. The real hero of Merryman's poem is Nature as an eighteenth century Utopian saw her." It is true Mr. O'Connor points out that Merryman aimed at producing "a perfectly proportioned work of art on a contemporary subject, with every detail subordinated to the central theme"; but this is not an exclusively classical aim, and in any case Mr. O'Connor is forced to point out the structural weaknesses of the poem.

The poem is a dream about a slanging-match between a young girl complaining that the fine young men of the time will marry only old women, and an old man complaining of the untrustworthy nature of young brides (he has been presented with a son on his wedding-night). There is a voluble attack on marriage, and another on clerical celibacy. It is not remarkable that many Irish critics have felt rather uneasy about the poem.

An English reader can perhaps accept the poem with more equanimity; it has a marvellous gusto and fluency, and some of its realistic passages have a brilliance that seems almost exclusively an Irish gift. Here is a passage from the old man's denunciation of the girl:

> Now tell us the truth and don't be shy,
> How long are you eating your dinner dry?
> A meal of spuds without butter or milk
> And the dirt in layers beneath your silk.
> Bragging and gab become your like
> But I know just where you sleep at night,
> And blanket or silk you never saw
> But a strip of old mat and a bundle of straw
> In a dirty old hut with a seat
> And slime that slashes about your feet,
> A carpet of weeds from door to wall
> And the hens inscribing their tracks on all.

Mr. O'Connor is well-known in this country as a fine novelist and short-story writer; this book reminds one that he is a good poet as well. He has appended to *The Midnight Court* a handful of lyrics translated from other Irish poets. Of one at least of these, *To Tomaus Costello at the Wars*, he has produced a version which itself is a small masterpiece.

HENRY REED

CLIO AND THE CITIZEN

History and the Reader. By G. M. TREVELYAN. *Cambridge University Press.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

This brief pamphlet, which reprints a lecture given to the National Book League by Dr. Trevelyan, is, in substance, a reaffirmation of a well-known essay of his written some forty odd years ago. Alarmed, I think without real cause, by Professor Bury's insistence that history is a science, Dr. Trevelyan argued that history is a muse, and pleaded for an art of history which should attract the reader by its charm of narrative. He now adds a strong plea for the study of history as alike urgent to the citizen and essential to his intellectual and imaginative development.

Dr. Trevelyan, I think, was needlessly alarmed by Bury's plea for a scientific history, and I do not suppose he would seriously claim that Acton and Maitland would have repudiated the canons of evidence which Bury was anxious to apply to the testimony it is the historian's business to weigh. What I find a little bewildering in his present plea, written with his characteristic ease and charm, is that when he emphasises the value of history to the citizen, he fails to tell us what kind of history it is in which the historian offers civic instruction. If the reader, for instance, took his history of the seventeenth century in England from Gardiner's famous volumes, or even from Dr. Trevelyan's own widely read *England Under the Stuarts*, he would find a narrative of deep interest in which the one thing left unexplained was the historian's own philosophy, the values, accordingly, which are implicit in his account. It is difficult not to feel that both Gardiner and Dr. Trevelyan wrote of Cromwell very much, if unconsciously, with Gladstone in their minds; and since both of them had a profound allegiance to Mr. Gladstone they were unable to do justice to those social movements of the period with which Cromwell, under the guidance, I suspect, of Henry Ireton, had little patience. In the result, Lilburne, Overton, Walwyn, and Winstanley appear to them very much as Keir Hardie must have appeared to the Liberal leaders at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the same way, I venture to doubt whether the reader of Mr. Herbert Fisher's *History of Europe* would realise, without a careful clue, that he is seeing the record of Europe—all civilisation—from the angle of a cultured and disillusioned Whig who watches with sorrow those who he thinks are the barbarians knocking at the gate, and is driven to conclude that history, like life, is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

If I may be respectfully disrespectful to Dr. Trevelyan, I should venture to guess that the great difference between the generation of his eminent great uncle, Macaulay, or his near contemporaries, Guizot, Thiers, Thierry, and that in which he himself has exercised so wide an influence is that, in the earlier period, one knows without much difficulty under which flag the great writers were sailing; while, in the later, the flags have been put away, and the reader meets a very courteous and charming guide who bids him, above all things, to be reasonable without ever telling him that the criterion of reasonableness is the undesirability of changing the conditions under which Trinity College in Cambridge, or New College, Oxford, remain such delectable pools of tranquillity in a world that, elsewhere, is rocked by a mighty tempest. This is not the place to argue the implications of this view. I submit, very humbly, to Dr. Trevelyan that before history can be a training in citizenship, we have to be clearer than his gentle persuasiveness permits him to be upon what conditions enable a man to be a citizen; and, secondly, before we are sure that narrative stimulates the intellect and the imagination, whether these are to stimulate them in a vacuum or to some broadly agreed end. We are now to have a "common act of worship" to begin the school day. In a wide sense, it is to inculcate respect for the Christian virtues. Dr. Trevelyan may remember that when, last year, the Ministry proposed a course to give intending teachers a sense of the bearing of historical research into Christian origins, a famous Tory organisation protested against the course on the ground that it would undermine the nation's faith in Christian principles. All the grace and elegance of Dr. Trevelyan's charming lecture ought not to prevent us from suspecting that he has really written a persuasive Whig manifesto in an undertone which, because it lacks the strident emphasis of Macaulay's trumpet, is nevertheless playing the same tune. It would be attractive to possess a clear account of Dr. Trevelyan's philosophy of history. He conceals his fortitude beneath a suavity so elegant that I suspect in his fortitude a more determined emphasis than he permits us to see. It was Stevenson, I think, who said that the man who knows how to omit can make an Iliad of a daily newspaper. I wonder if Dr. Trevelyan was the man whom Stevenson had in mind.

HAROLD J. LASKI

LESSONS OF DEFEAT

Plea for Liberty. By GEORGES BERNANOS. Translated by HARRY LORIN BINSSE and RUTH BETHELL. *Dennis Dobson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It is four years since *Lettre aux anglais*—now translated as *Plea for Liberty*—was published in Brazil, where its author had sought retirement with his family. Exile from catastrophe has taken many forms, not all of them creditable; that of Bernanos, poet and mystic, was as vital, as challenging as de Gaulle's. Neither could accomplish his mission by waiting in defeat; and of the two, now that victory of a kind has been achieved, Bernanos may prove to have been the more indispensable figure. If one had to choose a single book from all the many-sided literature produced by the war, that book would be *Lettre aux anglais*, written when the issue was in doubt. It is as necessary to us with Hitler dead and his lieutenants on trial as it would have been if the Gestapo uniforms were now patrolling Palace Yard. Then, it would have taken its place in the bible of the oppressed peoples; the chance is now that it may be, not ignored—for it has already made its mark—but that its truths may be put off and put off till a more convenient time. Have we learnt anything, anything at all, from the war just ended? Read the newspapers, question conscience: the answer must be, No. Though we don't care much to think about it, the feeling "*That's* all over" doesn't convince us for long. Already, secretly perhaps, we are taking for granted another war that will be like the last, a civil war of humanity. We are back where we were. And where was that? Don't know—oh, yes, the other side were guilty. The other side may be Hitler, Stalin, the armament makers, the pacifists, the little men, the men of Munich. They are all, with the exception of Hitler, still here; they are, in fact, ourselves. Nothing has changed, except that we have gained experience in waging war. This is the truth that Bernanos makes us face on every page of his book, and if it did nothing else that would be its justification.

The reader addressed by Bernanos will not seek in *Plea for Liberty* yet another political argument. It contains an argument, with which one may or may not agree; its larger purpose is to short-cut argument, to appeal to hopes and instincts driven underground by politics. Let me quote from here and there to illustrate this appeal: the extraordinary passion of the original makes itself felt even in translation (and uninspired translation at that).

> We have lost touch with the people: that is the bitter truth. Between them and us, circumstances have produced, increased and prospered, a sort of middle-men, recruited from all classes, terribly difficult to define, having no particular virtues or vices. . . . To-day the business men and the politicians are the makers of history. . . .
>
> The story of our terrible misfortune is a very ordinary one, a common and almost trivial story. It is a story of treason with no traitors, enormous with consequences; yet look at it closely, and it splits and scatters into an almost infinite, incalculable number of sordid trifles: as though all the mediocrity which, when spread abroad in this great body, did not threaten its vital equilibrium, had suddenly gathered at one point in a huge, fixed abscess. The satanic genius of Hitler's propaganda achieved this masterly stroke. It ferreted out a handful of half-true, half-false notions suitable for cementing together all the mediocrities; it federated them. The mediocre soldier, the mediocre intellectual, the mediocre priest, who sometimes thought themselves so distant from each other, suddenly realised that they were closely linked together, bound by their common mediocrity. And the cohesion of the mediocre made any national reaction impossible. . . .
>
> The same breed of men will, to-morrow, exploit your victory. Suppose that a miracle, or some unforeseeable event—the stroke of genius of a military leader, a technical discovery, or anything else—had given us the victory last year; those same so-called "national" élites, those "right-thinking" bourgeois, generals, admirals, members of the Academy and Archbishops who to-day would have us see in Hitler the Providential instrument for avenging them, would be strutting about panoplied in our honour, just as now they strut about panoplied in our shame. For the last months the leaders of the democracies have constantly been talking of Christian principles. Let them mistrust principles! Our élites had principles, they crawled with principles as a corpse with maggots. . . .
>
> These home-truths may be painful to many in England. Those who are now betraying you belong to the same breed you humoured in Italy, and which you insist on still humouring in Spain; you even humour them in your own country. Habits of speech bind men together, and the turn of phrase used by these fellows resembles your own. They betray you, if I may put it so, in the very terms they would have used to defend you, if it had been in their interest to defend you. . . .

Bernanos writes with a particular treachery, a particular defeat in mind—one he had seen growing and perfecting itself for years; but many of the things he says about France's collapse apply equally to an England that escaped. That they apply we would all, more or less, admit in private: here as there, the money-maker rules, the sullen hatred grows between classes, every demagogue speaks for the people, the vast army of middlemen pride themselves on their neutrality, the dyed shirts wait their chance; changes of government or policy make very little difference to this state of dissolution, however tightly (since Munich) it may have been bottled up. Our collapse, unlike France's, has yet to come.

Exaggerated, you may say: habit encourages us to keep up appearances. Yet I believe that a large number of readers who are not wholly ruled by their preconceptions will respond instinctively to Bernanos' terms of address: he convinces, as I have suggested, by flooding the watertight compartments in which we are liable to keep our politics, our religion, our personal lives. It's not his business, he says, to offer a solution; he aims to convert us to more radical and simple ways of thinking. We may reject wholly, while respecting, the narrow Christian framework within which M. Bernanos sees the main hope for the future. He is a Catholic, a monarchist, a patriot reminding one of Péguy whose God had a special love for Frenchmen; but these labels convey little of the attitude that has made Bernanos as fierce a critic of Franco as of Munich. He is, in fact, the author of *Les Grands Cimitières sous la Lune*, a voice speaking for all men of good will in our time. He is a mystic among politicians. All social thinking, wrote Péguy, begins with mysticism and ends in politics. "C'est nous qui amassons et c'est eux qui pillent." A Péguy, a Bernanos, a Dostoevsky, even a D. H. Lawrence, out of their solitudes, may have more to tell us about ourselves, than all those who govern and manœuvre in the name of Democracy.

G. W. STONIER

GETTING MARRIED, AND AFTER

And So to Wed. A Play and a Postscript. By NICHOLAS DAVENPORT. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Marriage, which has been said to attract light and variable men by its very awfulness, is one of those vital problems which may be evaded but not solved by an epigram. Mr. Nicholas Davenport, in an essay preceded by a play, is one of the latest writers to speculate on this theme. We are told that Mr. Shaw has given the play his blessing, and has, moreover, provided a hint or two for the construction and dialogue. That may well be; it has a briskness of stage manner which suggests at least the influence of the master, but of sophistication of thought there is curiously little. It is a sentimental piece about those delightful people who have no three-dimensional existence outside the West End theatre (though I sometimes suspect that they are also to be found in its matinée audiences). There is the charming, vague mother who wanders across the stage with a hat and a duster, the creative son who works in television and is called Stephen, the nice young woman (a journalist, with a titled father), and the not so nice young woman. We have even the comic cook who is an exiled Roumanian princess. These old friends have pleased for so long that they may well do so again. But for novelty of idea it has nothing but a word to offer. Now Lamb, who, as a critic might have known better, once made the mistake of building a play round a word. The exquisite hero of his play *Mr. H.* had eventually to reveal that his initial stood for Hogsflesh. Mr. Davenport's word is *lease-lend*, as applied to human relationships. As this is merely a new way of describing something much older, there is little to be learnt from the play except that the nicer girl has her way in the end, and that is by no means always the case in real life

It would be better to begin with the Postscript, which is an honest discussion. Mr. Davenport sees the growing difficulty of reconciling the citizen and the State, which, while replacing the father in society, is not concerned with the family unit. "Marriage with or without children," he observes, "was the question that used to perplex the individual. To-day, children with or without marriage is the question that agitates

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the State." But is planned procreation a good thing? Those who campaign for bigger families have power politics as their motive, not the well-being of the individual. As Mr. Davenport points out, the decline in population began about the time of the Education Act of 1870, which made working-class children no longer a source of family income. There was also the new independence that industrialisation gave to women; and financial independence, he holds, furthers the progress in marriage relationships. He quotes Shaw:

> Family life will never be decent, much less ennobling, until the central horror of the dependence of woman on man is done away with. At present it reduces the difference between marriage and prostitution to the difference between trade unionism and unorganised casual labour: a huge difference, no doubt, as to order and comfort, but not a difference in kind.

Mr. Davenport would like to have a revised Church Marriage Service, more civilised divorce laws and no State interference with the size of families. This is rational enough, but on longer issues he is hardly clear. His plea for a return to the Gospels is scarcely saved from being a contradiction of his other arguments by a particularly individual interpretation of certain sayings. On a short-term view, several of the problems that he discusses are temporary ones: the numerical distribution of the sexes, for instance, may be altered in a generation or two. The real question is: will there be marriage and giving in marriage in the Atom Age? Mr. Davenport believes in a more spiritual concept of marriage arising out of greater freedom and a higher standard of living. Perhaps he is right, and it is only in a spiritual sense that marriage, like so many of our customs and traditions, can survive. It is unfortunate that there is so little place for a genial and humanistic liberalism of Mr. Davenport's kind in a world that no longer believes in the doctrine of the Golden Mean.

NAOMI LEWIS

THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

Mixed Farming and Muddled Thinking. A Report of an Enquiry Organised by VISCOUNT ASTOR and B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE. *Macdonald.* 5s.

Glory Hill Farm (Epilogue). By CLIFTON REYNOLDS. *John Lane.* 7s. 6d.

The profound agricultural revolution of our time is described in the Report presented by Viscount Astor and B. Seebohm Rowntree. The title does less than justice to this book, which is something more than a diatribe against the alleged desire of farmers to return to the mixed farming of the nineteenth century. The authors claim their researches indicate that this country should devote itself to specialised forms of agriculture founded mainly on livestock on grass leys, and with a particular emphasis on dairy cows. They maintain that if the lessons of our recent agricultural revolution are understood, this type of husbandry can be profitable, can be socially important in an economy like ours, and can enable British farming to dispense with those State subsidies that have for generations undermined its relationship with the rest of the community.

The lessons of our agricultural experiences during the last few years are momentous, and they represent radical changes that may still be only their initial stages. The magnitude of these events will be appreciated when we realise, as the authors put it, that during the war, in spite of many physical limitations our farmers have produced as much extra food as if an area virtually the size of England had been reclaimed for food production. The characteristics of the revolution are convincingly described. They are (1) mechanisation on a scale so intense as to be a new phenomenon, and (2) a widespread application of scientific discoveries to daily farm practice. It is not surprising that an effect of this has been to attract the scientifically minded to agriculture. Instead of the towns drawing the best men from the farms, there are to-day numerous examples of first-class farmers who began in business and who find they prefer farming. "The significant thing is that they are often, though of course not always, better farmers because of their business training." Not the least pertinent submission in the book is the view that the future of British farming depends as much on the farm worker as on the farmer. The plea is for specialised husbandry. This calls for a reasonably high level of intelligence in the worker who must himself specialise with as much single-mindedness as his artisan counterpart in the factory.

The book is a sequel to a volume from the same source published in 1938 on the principles of a future policy for British agriculture. Despite its combative title it is more than a tract, and, for a book of its limited proportions gives a remarkably good picture of British farming to-day, in terms of the direction in which it is likely to move. It is books of this kind that the curious layman should read, rather than the popular and superficial books that exploit with such facility our hunger for information about the rural England we had isolated, until it became an alien world, with a wholly exotic appeal to those outside it.

That is why books on farming have lately been as evocative as books of travel. *Glory Hill Farm (Epilogue)* was preceded by three other volumes in the same series. The one thing that seems clear from this particular member of the sequence is that the author is no longer farming and that this Glory Hill story is at last concluded.

With marked inconsequence, the book is made up of a list of some of the marginal activities that constitute the author's business career, plus a series of rambling and sententious judgments on matters that seem to be outside the range of his particular expertise. There are long quotations from other writers like Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw and Geoffrey Crowther and finally some correspondence with a number of agriculturists. This correspondence owes nothing to the context, but is good in itself. It includes a spirited reply by Sir Robert Greig to the claim that British agriculture is pre-eminently efficient. He admits that "with regard to output per man, Britain stands high." He singles out a feature of our farming which has been exposed by the economic pressure of recent years and by the accelerated tempo of mechanisation: this is the obsoleteness of our farm layouts and buildings, and of the size of our fields and farming units generally. Considerable research is being given to these matters now, and with the help of such provisions as the new Advisory Service, we may see in the near future a revolution in farming technology which may make agriculture our most efficient industry as it always has been our largest.

R. PUGH

Palmer's Company Guide, 35th Edition *5s.*
Palmer's Private Companies, 39th Edition *2s.6d.*
Stevens and Sons, Ltd.

These books begin a new series that should bring the law to the million. Sir Francis Palmer's two works are well-established and beyond criticism—they were written for the layman and in their numerous editions they have kept pace with all the changes in the law. The *Company Guide*, when it started life as the *Shareholders' Companion* in the heyday of nineteenth-century industrial expansion, elbowed and almost challenged the Bible on the shelves of the growing army of middle-class financiers. *Private Companies*, too, has been a popular work for nearly 60 years; and, in view of the increasing popularity of the private limited company as a means of raising capital without inviting the public to subscribe, this reissue is welcome.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 846

Set by G. W. Stonier

The London Zoo has sent to Prague, as a gesture of friendship, two wallabies. Competitors are asked to suggest similar presents, friendly or unfriendly, and between either nations or individuals: the gift should be accompanied by a note of not more than 100 words. Entries by April 23.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 843

Set by V. S. Pritchett

A local newspaper prints the following agony column announcement: "Mr. S—— apologises to those friends he was prevented from saying good-bye to last Thursday" The usual prizes are offered for a poem, not exceeding 16 lines, in the manner of Thomas Hood, explaining this mysterious situation

Report by V. S. Pritchett

Our competitors display such talent in the translation of seventeenth-century French verse, that I feared they would not condescend to a punning ballad by "poor" Tom Hood. I was mistaken. Once again, a mass of entries and a very high standard. Faithless Nelly Gray was the natural model to follow. R. J. P. Hewison, for example:

> George Smart, a lad as bold as brass,
> Alas, more shy of tin,
> To dine and chink a social glass
> Inn-vited friends and kin

or H. M. Baker:

> As Satan always finds some work
> For idle hands, they say,
> I picked a lock, and stole a clock
> To pass the time away.

And Pibwob brought it up to date:

> After I cracked that crib, I had
> To do a bunk—and why?
> A bloke tipped me the wink, which shows
> It wasn't all my eye.

L. E. J., H. G. W., Sir Robert Witt, Little Billee, H. M. Baker and Chas. Melvin were among the best in this vein. The manner of *Eugene Aram* was followed by T. Casson; for the "to-morrow-I'm-going-to-be-hung" motif was one very plausible explanation of the mystery.

I congratulate all on preferring the light and lyrical to the gross pleasures of punning; a good pun should slip down like an oyster: fatal to chew it over. Allan M. Laing's version of the melodies of alcoholism was the richest entry. I award him the first prize. And the second I divide between Leslie Johnson, Chas. T. Melvin, L. Marshall Jones and V. F.

1st PRIZE

FAREWELL PARTY: AN AGONY COLUMN ADVERTISEMENT

Though bewildered, I'm guessing last night I was guest
Where the juice of the grape was uncommonly pressed;
And I dimly remember that I was the toast
Thickly buttered by friends and a two-headed host.

Now, my wandering fancy's becoming quite plain:
I recall I was leaving that evening, by train,
And each jolly companion was there, like a toff,
To do me the honour of seeing me off.

Toast and toasters were drunk when six cabriolets
Took us off through the night (though it seemed to me daze)
And one of the cabs, with its seas-over crew,
Took a strangely wrong turning and met Waterloo.

So that, when I left Paddington, by the ten-four,
Five cabfuls of fares said farewell, and no more;
So here, where my agony's cut down to size,
To that missing cab-load, I bid tearful good-byes.

ALLAN M. LAING

2nd PRIZE

Sam Sparks he was a wild young man
Whose ways we can't applaud,
And as he left the narrow path,
They ordered him abroad.

Now Sam he loved Louisa Lee,
But when he spoke his mind,
And asked her would she conjugate,
She waywardly declined.

And though he'd planned a farewell spree
With certain friends in town,
He felt that he could not turn up
Just when he'd been turned down.

"Alas!" said he, "I'm far too blue
To paint the city red.
If I can't find a mate in Lou,
I want no mate instead."

LESLIE JOHNSON

THE WELSHER

You did not find me in my place;
Dear friends, you found me out.
Since I could not all backers face
I turned a right-about.

I laid against the winning horse:
For long I stood to lay.
And as, alas! it stayed the course,
Of course I could not stay.

Fate meted out 'twas you who won
And I was one to lose.
I duly saw that I was done;
I could not meet my dues.

'Tis odd that even out of sight
I cite this point of view—
So much I owed 'tis only right
To write this ode to you.

CHAS. T. MELVIN

SAM STATUSQUO AND THE GESTAPO

Sam Statusquo a party threw,
But, ere it reached its height,
A message came an Sam withdrew
Into the black of night.

For, at his door, four grasping fists
Grabbed him and, "Look alive!"
A voice growled: "You Industrialists
Are for the Export Drive!"

They threw him in a taxi, where
He uttered this wry moan:
"I threw a party, but declare
I am the party thrown!"

His press "farewell," which caused dismay
Among the plutocrats,
Said not that he's the U.S.A.
Security for fats!

V. F.

GETAWAY

We were expecting it
Just after tea,
Nor were neglecting it
Swank had the key.

Then came an order Go
Back to the Shed,
Follow the Warder, so
Thus were we led.

Swank acted wilfully,
Sped away skilfully,
Vanished so slickly.
Don't ever blame him 'cause
He, like the gent he was,
Apologised quickly.

L. MARSHALL JONES

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